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## MURDER!

When two Irish Patriots, in the mistaken notion that they were assisting the Irish people, shot General Sir H. Wilson, they were dubbed murderers. They regarded him as the military representative of an enemy Government, and thought themselves justified in taking his life because they had but recently learned in the British Army that this was a right and proper thing to do; but they were hanged. The judge who condemned them talked some impertinent nonsense about the impossibility of reconciling Christianity and murder, but was apparently unaware that various Christian nations had been devoting the whole of their energies for some years to murdering each others subjects.

The fact is, that there is a double standard of judgment. Murder by an individual on his own behalf is wrong, and will be punished; but murder by a ruling class in defence of its right to the private ownership of the means of life may be deemed "the preservation of law and order," and is then not only excusable but highly moral.

The politicians carry out the orders of the ruling class, and are, of course, permitted in the execution of their duty to murder as much and as often as may be necessary.

Recently, ex-President Taft was in this country, and was received with open arms by Society, the Press, the Legal Profession, the Political Clubs, etc.

Ex-President Taft is an honourable man: he was also Governor of Philippines during Roosevelt's Presidency. When in 1904, Roosevelt was running for the United States Presidency for the second time, much

depended on the success of his policy in the Philippines, which America had not long forcibly annexed from Spain. Owing to natural discontent and gross misgovernment, the Islands were in a state of insurrection; but were this news to leak out, the election might be lost.

To send troops to assist or evacuate those already there would have exposed the true position. What, then, did Taft do?—this honourable man, this confidant of European Cabinets, this lion of the best Society, entertained by Judges, and beamed upon by Royalty?

Stanley Portall Hyatt, an eye-witness, gives the answer:—

"The insurrection had broken out, or rather, had blazed up, some months before, inconveniently near the Presidential Election, as the leaders knew well. . . .

"When the men in red took the field . . . the High Gods of Manila attempted to keep the news out of the Press by practically cutting off Samar from communication with the outer world, leaving the unfortunate coastal people, the tao or peasantry, to their fate. Yet for months past, those same tao, knowing the Pulojanos were preparing to rise, had been sending frenzied appeals for protection to Manila. A thousand white troops distributed round the coast would have resulted in the saving of 50,000 lives. There was actually a white regiment in the island, at Calbayog, yet even when the Pulojanos were burning and slaughtering a few miles away it was not allowed to leave its camp. Officially, Samar was at peace; and if the



14th Infantry had taken the field the American nation might have begun to doubt the truth of Official statements, which would have meant the loss of votes. So the two were left to their fate. Within the year, nearly a hundred thousand of the natives of Samar perished, and the island was absolutely ruined; but still the election was won." (The Diary of a Soldier of Fortune, page 304.)

Even Churchill might envy the man with the above to his credit, and he could certainly never hope to beat for cool cheek the United States Government's statement that the Philippines are "happy, peaceful, and in the main prosperous, and keenly appreciative of the benefits of American rule." (Manchester Guardian, December 23rd, 1921.)

H. E.

### WELLS AT THE WORLD'S END.

It has become the fashion with those who cannot controvert Marx, to do the next worst thing—belittle him or patronise him. Usually, the most obvious fact that emerges is that the critic has not even a nodding acquaintance with his subject. One of the nightmares that afflict prospective Labour candidates is the probable "voice" from their audience testing their knowledge of Marx. As they will probably have heard that Marx took rather an important part in the founding of scientific socialism, it is clear that some "mugging up" of the subject will be handy, if not essential. Take H. G. Wells, for instance, the prospective Labour candidate for the University of London. I have spent such delightful hours with his Mr. Polly, young Ponderevo, Kipps, and other creations of his earlier fertile fancy, that it seems almost ungrateful to do it, but really . . .

According to the *Telegraph*, October 20th, his speech to his prospective constituents included these two sentences: "In Marx's time there was in Germany, a very defined barrier between the aristocratic land-owning class and the traders and the labourers. Marx failed to realise that this was a passing state of affairs which would break down in time."

That is what Wells said. This is what Marx said 70 years ago. Writing on December 1st, 1852, to the *New York Tribune*, he speaks of the numerous secret

societies which sprang up after the German Revolution of 1848. "There were some other Societies which were formed with a wider and more elevated purpose, which know that the upsetting of an existing Government was but a passing stage in the great impending struggle, and which intended to keep together and to prepare the party, whose nucleus they formed, for the last decisive combat which must, one day or another, crush forever in Europe the domination, not of mere 'tyrants,' 'despots' and 'usurpers,' but of a power far superior, and more formidable than theirs: that of capital over labour."

"The organisation of the advanced Communist Party in Germany was of this kind. . . . History showed to the Communist Party how, after the landed aristocracy of the Middle Ages, the monied power of the first capitalists arose and seized the reins of Government; how the social influence and political rule of this financial section of capitalists was superseded by the rising strength . . . of the manufacturing capitalists, and how at the present moment two more classes claim their turn of domination, the petty trading class and the industrial working class."

And then Wells tells an audience that "Marx failed to realise this was a passing state of affairs which would break down in time." True, it was only a University audience, comprising the sons of that noble "middle class" who served us so well during the recent international pogrom. Few would have heard of, and less would have read, Revolution and Counter-Revolution, or the Communist Manifesto. Here are a few scattered excerpts from the latter. It was written in German in 1847, as the platform of the "Communist League," first exclusively German, later international. (Italics mine.)

"Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat" (page 13, Kerr's edition).

" . . . the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway" (page 15).

"The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal

patriarchal, idyllic relations" (page 16).

"The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production . . . and with them the whole relations of society" (page 17).

"The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns" (page 19).

After briefly detailing the change from feudal to bourgeois society, he says, "A similar movement is going on before our eyes" (page 21).

"Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie to-day, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry" (page 29).

And so on. Space precludes quoting more. But is it necessary? Had not Wells better read Marx?

W. T. H.

### SCIENCE AND THE WORKING CLASS.

Although many of the bourgeois scientists, like Professor Ray Lankester, complain that the capitalists do not spend more money on the promotion of science, the fact is that they spend sufficient to meet their requirements.

What are their requirements? Profits.

The capitalists live by exploiting the working-class, and only in so far as any scientific discovery will lead to the obtaining by them of a greater share of the world's wealth, will they encourage the promotion of scientific knowledge.

There is, however, nothing new in this characteristic of the capitalists; their whole history is associated with this fact. In their struggle for supremacy over the feudal barons, the early capitalists discovered one of the obstacles to their advance was that pillar of feudal society, the Roman Catholic Church, of which Engels says:—

"It united the whole of feudalised Western Europe, in spite of all internal wars, into one grand political system, opposed as much to the schismatic Greeks as to the Mohammedan countries. It surrounded feudal institutions with the halo of divine consecration. It had organized its own hierarchy on the feudal model, and, lastly, it was itself by far the most powerful feudal lord, holding, as it did, fully one-third of the soil of the Catholic world."—(Socialism, Utopian and Scientific. Page 24. Kerr edition.)

Therefore, to undermine the "divine rights" of the feudal rulers, was one of the immediate tasks set before the capitalists; a task that was largely accomplished by the aid of science.

Coincident with the struggle of the capitalists to gain a greater share of political power proceeded the revival of scientific learning, and while science had hitherto been the humble servant of the church, confined within the limits set by the faith, and, says Engels, "for that reason had been no science at all," it now revolted against the church, and sided with the bourgeoisie in their revolutionary mission.

For the development of industrial production, the capitalists needed a science which ascertained the properties of natural objects and the modes of action of the forces of nature. Thus were they constrained to allow the scientists freedom to study the forces of nature. Natural science and the newly discovered natural laws served as tools in the hands of the bourgeoisie against the nobility, clergy-rights, and feudal lords. Social institutions were proved to be man's own handy-work, and not the result of divine intervention. So with science unhampered by the restrictions of feudalism, rapid advances were made in scientific knowledge.

At the same time such events as the discovery of the new sea route to India, the "fairyland full of immeasurable treasure," and the discovery of America "with its inexhaustible supply of gold and silver," also stimulated the growth of science, inasmuch as these discoveries opened up the possibilities of a world market, and satisfied the demands of wealth production on a large scale, as against the handicraft mode of production which prevailed hitherto.

From then down to the present time science has been harnessed to the car of industry, and it can be truthfully said that, nowadays, with its aid, wealth can now be produced almost as plentifully as water. But to the student of working-class politics, there is another side to the story. The socialist is not at all concerned as to whether the capitalists spend little or no money at all on scientific experiments, he knows that they will see to this themselves; what does concern him is that every fresh application of science to industry is a means



of increasing the exploitation of the working-class. As the capitalist-class own and control the means of wealth production, they also own the wealth when it is produced; only a minor fraction of this wealth goes back to the wealth producers; this fraction they must have to enable them to repeat the performance of producing wealth. Both classes will strive to obtain as great a share of the wealth as possible, but the capitalist being masters of the situation will be in the most favourable position; consequently, any new device to lower the cost of production will be eagerly sought after by them. The most up-to-date machinery, or the latest discovery of science, as long as it can be utilised in the productive process, generally serves to increase their share of the wealth produced.

As an instance of the application of scientific methods as an aid to production, I have before me a report of a lecture delivered at the meeting of the British Association held at Hull. Speaking on the subject of Psychology and Industry, Dr. Charles Myers said:—

"That the function of the psychologist was to try to discover how unnecessary movements causing needless fatigue could be done away with."

He then went on to give an instance of an application of this psychological test.

"He told us how in a well-known chocolate factory this had been overcome, and certain improvements had been suggested and adopted; and by the elimination of many unnecessary movements endlessly repeated, the workers had been able to increase their output; and not only felt less fatigued, but also more contented at the end of the day."—*Daily News*, September 8th, 1922.

Mr. Rowntree, of York, also testified to this in greater detail, and spoke of the excellence of the results obtained. So we learn that, leaving aside the point about the workers being more contented at the end of the day, by the application of the test the output of wealth was greater. As to whether the workers were contented at the end of the week, in the event of their discharge, our psychologist does not enlighten us. So just as the mathematical and other sciences have assisted in the exploitation of the working class, so mental science or, to give it its Sunday name, Psychology, is made to serve a similar purpose. Nevertheless, what has been said does not mean

that the workers should not devote their spare time to the study of scientific subjects, on the contrary they should use every means at their disposal to make themselves acquainted with science. As already pointed out, science in the hands of the master-class served them well in their struggle for their emancipation, as it has served them well since.

The workers must also utilise science to gain a knowledge of the means by which they can achieve their freedom from capitalist domination.

The study of the science of society, Sociology, which covers the entire range of human development, including the social sub-sciences such as history, economics, ethics, politics and psychology, will provide the key to the overthrow of the system under which the workers are robbed. The workers of the world must awaken to a recognition of the necessity of education, that is education that will give them an understanding of the laws of social evolution. They should learn all about the nature of the process by which they are robbed and kept in subjection. With this knowledge they will take the necessary action to establish Socialism; then as owners of the world's forces of production, they will welcome every fresh advance of science as an aid to the happiness of society. Fellow-workers make a study of and organise for the establishment of Socialism.

R. REYNOLDS.

## A Lecture on The Conflict Between SOCIALISM & RELIGION

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## THE CAPITAL SENTENCE.

In the period of the late European carnage, when the world's youth was engaged in making the world safe for hypocrisy, the manufacture of death-dealing instruments proceeded apace at the Government Arsenal at Woolwich. Mechanics were drafted from all parts of the country to this arsenal in order to provide the "Tommies" the means wherewith to disembowel the "Fritzes." Sufficient accommodation not being available in the district, the Government perforce had to erect shelters—one could not truthfully term them houses—in which the munition workers and their families could live.

When the capitalists deemed it advisable to call a halt to the slaughter, the demand for armaments became less urgent, and the Arsenal workers, like Othello, found their occupation gone. For various reasons, chief among these perhaps was the shortage of working class dwellings, the munition makers were unable to return to the districts in which they formerly resided. In many cases these workers were unable to pay the rent demanded (for it must not be supposed that a munificent Government had allowed them to live in these houses rent free), and arrears accrued in amounts ranging from £15 to £70. Then did the Government, through H.M. Office of Works, apply to the Woolwich County Court for possession of the "houses." Before the Court, the tenants were represented by a solicitor. The *Star* (4/10/22) states:—

Mr. I. H. Macdonald, defending, said that many of these men had been induced to come to Woolwich to work for the Government, and now, being out of work, were unable to leave owing to the housing difficulty. *Lewisham Guardians*, ... unlike other boards, had not given relief in cash to pay the rent.

However, these facts did not influence the Court, and so, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not, ejectment orders were granted to the landlords, suspended as long as the current rent was paid, and a certain amount of the arrears paid off. But the action did not end before the worthy Judge, Sir T. Grainger, had unburdened himself of a masterly example of capitalist jurisprudence. Listen to the band:—

When one defendant said he was not responsible for being out of work, Judge Sir Thomas Grainger

said, "I cannot hear you on that. Until Labour can regard Capital as its greatest benefactor there will always be unemployment.—*Star*, 4/10/22.

"Until Labour can regard"—kind regards, Sir Thomas!

The halo of "impartiality" with which the capitalist scribes so dearly love to adorn the court judges, has many times been the subject of comment in these columns, and although this incident serves to show just how much, or how little, favour the worker may expect in the Courts, we may leave this point aside, and, for the sake of the credulous, once more focus the searchlight of Socialist analysis on the cause of unemployment, and see just how long unemployment need last.

The principle cause of unemployment is the fact that, by virtue of their monopoly of the instruments for producing the necessities of life, the capitalists are able to rob the workers of the wealth they (the workers) produce—the capitalists returning, on the average, just sufficient of that wealth to enable the workers to keep physically fit to go on producing, and to reproduce their species. The difference between the total amount produced by the workers and that portion returned to them still leaves a vast surplus of commodities unconsumed. It should be borne in mind that this difference increases as machinery develops and the productivity of labour increases. Now, in spite of all the riots of luxury indulged in by the capitalists, the Royal weddings, and what not, a surfeit of goods still remains. The workers obviously cannot buy back these goods, however much they may be in need of them. Thus the markets of the world become overstocked. As, under the present system, goods are only produced for profit, when the capitalist is not sure of a market for the goods, production is slackened, and the unemployed army increases. And this unemployed army will last just as long as the present system of producing for profit lasts. All talk therefore of capital being a "benefactor" is so much moonshine, intended to mislead the unthinking. "Malefactor" is the right word, and while we find judges ready to mouth such platitudes as quoted above, we can realise how earnest was Bumble's dictum: "If the law supposes that, the law is an ass—an idiot."

Bestir yourselves then workers! Study Socialism, and make yourselves proof



against the dope issued by the masters daily from pulpit, Press, and platform. Having done that, make yourselves judges of the motives of the master class, and organise in the Socialist Party in order to pronounce the capital sentence on the present system, with its unemployment and the attendant evils — poverty, misery, and disease.

H. W. M.

### WORDS AND DEEDS.

"The time for words is past: now is the time for action." This is an indispensable aid to the Labour speaker. Introduced with fervour at an appropriate moment by one of the "Billy Sundays" of the movement it never fails to bring the roof down. Any novice at a loss for something useful to say, on any Labour platform, in any quarter of the globe, can depend upon it for "loud and prolonged applause." The effect of its delivery to an open-mouthed audience of several thousands in the Albert Hall, by that platform acrobat, Tom Mann, is truly wonderful. Don't imagine, however, that it is something new. George Lansbury has been saying it as regularly as clockwork for twenty years or more; Tom Mann is now over seventy, and it must have been a commonplace with him in his early twenties; and no doubt Moses, by whom he sets his course, was hurling it at the murmuring Israelites in Egypt and in the Desert. Throughout the ages, and in any place where glib tongues have had foolish listeners, this shabby half-truth has been doing service.

Its very use is a denial of its accuracy; for if words were valueless these orators should not orate, and Tom Mann ought to give his gymnastic displays without marring them with speech. Again, to be precise, speech is a form of action. However, let us consider what is intended by those who use this phrase.

Do they mean that any action, just action itself is desirable? Obviously not, for the "actionists" are particularly loud and wordy in their denunciation of those workers, who as police and soldiers, under Government instruction, break the heads and scatter the brains of unemployed demonstrators. Clearly the *kind* of action is im-

portant, and we immediately find that the "actionists," apart from numerous subdivisions, are divided by a theoretical difference into two main groups. On the one hand are the "realists," the painstaking, sane and safe plodders of the Labour Party, whose "action" takes the form of administering capitalist laws on national and local governing bodies. They are oppressed with a sense of their responsibility and the need to go slow. They have heaps of fine ideals, but relegate them to the distant future, and devote themselves entirely to "practical" politics.

The other group are the Communists. They are in a hell of a hurry. They are incurably romantic, and aim at living dangerously. They scan the political horizon anxiously, searching for a cloud "the size of a man's hand" which shall be the sign of the revolutionary crisis. They are like the Adventists, living in momentary expectation of the second coming of Christ; and they have some hopes. They resemble the other group only in this, that both of them are believers in *doing* things, and are infinitely contemptuous of mere theorising. Their actions, judged by results, are not brilliantly successful. They are always "turning over new leaves," "formulating new programmes," "moving with the times," and "learning from past mistakes." The second of their immutable principles is summed up in another misleading saying, that "people who never make mistakes never make anything."

The chief activity of the reactionary actionists, between 1914 and 1919, was supporting the war. They didn't want the workers to have knowledge of Socialism, they wanted them to have practical skill in bayonet thrusts and the like; but there was a curious unwillingness to lead on the part of the hot-air leaders. Almost without exception, they were busy telling the workers to go and fight; but were not able to go themselves. Perhaps, this was due to their modesty.

In fact, on closer examination, the activities of this school appear to be mainly talk. They talk on Parish Councils, on Borough Councils, on County Councils, and in the House of Commons. The Labour leaders talk war in war-time, and peace in peacetime; they talk big to their office staffs and

they talk small at the King's Garden Parties, they talk slop at brotherhood meetings and wildly at Congress. They never talk Socialism.

The other actionists took the field in earnest when the Russian upheaval occurred. They saw red revolution everywhere. They talked about it, and urged other people to begin it; except when they were run in. Then they assured his honour that there was a mistake somewhere, and appeared to be trying to give the impression that they were only collecting souls for Jesus, or something equally harmless. This they call tactics. Some people believe that the workers will be emancipated by tactics.

There was a constant stream of them travelling to Moscow to tell Lenin that England was hovering on the brink of revolution: none of them ever thought of doing a good deed by pushing her over. This may have been more tactics.

In those days they used to tell the tale about Communism in Russia. As this didn't quite square with theory, and although they don't believe in theories, they condescended sufficiently to try to show how Russia unaided could jump from Feudalism to Socialism. They did this in order to explain the fact. Of course, the fact never existed, and in due course Moscow permitted them to say so. Then they laid the blame on the apathy of the workers in West Europe, but Zinoviev has now unkindly exploded this. A correspondent of the *Observer* writes (November 19th, 1922):—

"Very significant also was Zinoviev's speech at Petrograd at the opening of the Congress, which contradicted the popular Bolshevik theory that the New Economic Policy is due chiefly to the postponement of world-revolution. 'We are now aware,' said Zinoviev, 'that the New Economic Policy was inevitable for Russia, even despite a successful world-revolution.'"

Nevertheless, these actionists are still "proving" their unsound theory.

In practice, all the actionists talk and write just as we do. They do not act, because the capitalists won't let them. They have, however, two distinct ways of looking at this fact. The Communists pretend not to see it, and by keeping up a terrific clamour of words they succeed for a time in persuading those who don't know, even many of the master class, that they are making things sum.

The Labour Party, somewhat wiser in its generation, only chooses to do those things the capitalists permit. This keeps them frightfully busy, and although the products of their activity are nil, because the concessions they get are only those the capitalists would give anyway, they appear to be getting somewhere. This kind of people, now in the Labour Party, and previously as Liberals, have been doing their practical work for half a century, and except that the workers' position is getting steadily worse, they don't seem to have reached anywhere in particular.

The capitalist class are able to prevent any action useful to the workers and dangerous to themselves, because they control the force which is the deciding factor. The Army and Navy, the police and the law are at their disposal. The power to control these forces is theirs, because their agents are elected to the House of Commons, the central governing body. These agents are elected by the workers. The workers elect capitalist agents because they want Capitalism and not Socialism. They do not want Socialism because they do not understand it. Conditions produced by capitalist developments are preparing the minds of the workers, but they will not obtain an intelligent grasp of socialist principles except through the spoken and written word.

We, and both schools of actionists, are engaged mainly in talking and writing; but we talk Socialism, they do not.

When the workers understand Socialism they will take the direct and simple steps necessary to give them control of the political machinery of society for the purpose of introducing Socialism. Until that time, the only useful action possible is the act of speaking and writing about Socialism.

We are Socialists.

We preach Socialism.

E. R. H.

### ERRATA.

For "£1 Treasury Note"—line 42, page 246, December *Socialist Standard*—read "Gold Sovereign."



**OFFICIAL NOTICE.**

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JANUARY



1923

**WHERE DOES THE LABOUR PARTY STAND?**

In the recent election battle the Labour Party, true to the only principle it possesses, fought for votes. The voters, except for an almost negligible minority, are opposed to attack on the present system of society. To get their votes the Labour Party had therefore to offer them something statesman-like and inoffensive, differing just enough from the programmes of the opposing political parties to gain the sympathy of the discontented. It stood, therefore, as a bulwark against both "reaction and revolution"; but it was going to rap the knuckles of the profiteer with a capital levy. It didn't explain how the cancelling of State debts to capitalists with money taken from capitalists, would alter the position of the workers as a slave class, and in case of misunderstanding it hastened to point out that Bonar Law had recently been strong in his approval. It advocated nationalisation, a measure definitely inimical to working-class interests, and hid behind the *Daily Mail*, which during the war, supported this proposal as a means of allaying discontent.

The "No More War" Labour Party was so far successful as to return 146 members to the House, the majority of whom supported the late war.

The election over, a rapid change took place in the attitude of the *Daily Herald*, the Labour Party's mouthpiece. The Labour Party exists on money obtained through Trade Union affiliation, and self-preservation and the need to demonstrate the usefulness of money spent on political activities, required that the Labour Party should make at least a pretence of forcing the Government to be more generous to the unemployed and to try to lessen unemployment. They had to make a brave show, and they did.

The *Herald* made much of the Labour Members' belligerent attitude at the opening of the House, when by a skilful combining of some revolutionary jargon with the politicians' ordinary verbal window-dressing, they succeeded in creating the desired impression. Thousands of emotional "rebels," with short memories and no knowledge of Socialism, felt delightful thrills and settled down blissfully happy to await the coming of the millenium, introduced gracefully but firmly, and above all constitutionally, by J. R. Clynes and Ramsay MacDonald.

To point to the Labour Party's black record and to remind the over-trustful that the Labour Party was part of the Coalition Government up to 1918, and shared responsibility for all the acts of that Government, is to these people merely partisan bias. "Give Labour a chance," they say, as if nearly a generation of persistent betrayal were not enough. But why wait?

Are the problems which face the workers capable of solution within the capitalist system, or are they not? If they are, then Socialism is not only an idle dream, but to waste time and energy on propagating Socialism is criminal folly. If they are not, then those who divert working-class energies to a futile attempt to save the present system are of necessity enemies of the workers and must be irreconcilably opposed by the Socialist. There is no need to await events to put this to the test. The workers are slaves to the capitalist class because the latter own the means of producing wealth. The workers will either replace Capitalism by Socialism, or they will retain Capitalism. If they perpetuate Capitalism they will perpetuate their slavery to the capitalist class. The form may change; the slaves may become well-fed and well-clothed; they may

be given access to the literary and artistic crumbs from their master's table; they may become contented, but they will still be slaves.

Wage slavery is inherent in the capitalist organisation of society. The presence of a number, even of a majority of Labour Members in the House of Commons will not alter the fact. When the workers understand and want Socialism, they will have it; not before. Many Labour Members really do imagine, although elected on a non-Socialist programme, that they can take action in Parliament to further Socialism; but they are no less dangerous because it is with sincerity that they propagate their delusion.

What is of chief moment, is that the majority of the Labour Members, from ignorance or with intent, are prepared to support the continued existence of the capitalist system.

As Philip Snowden says:

"The British Labour Party is certainly not Socialist in the sense in which Socialism is understood upon the Continent. It is not based upon the recognition of the class struggle; it does not accept the teaching of Marx . . ." (*Manchester Guardian Reconstruction Supplement*, 26th Oct., 1922.)

As Mrs. Snowden says, the object of the British Labour Party is to demonstrate that it is "a practical alternative Government," led by a man (Ramsay MacDonald), who "will uphold a constitutional Government as rigorously as any Conservative," and who can be imagined "seconding the suspension of a Labour Member from the Clyde with a dignity and a reverence for the House of Commons, which even Mr. Asquith could not surpass" (*Observer*, November 25th, 1922).

The Labour Party's main argument is that an honest and efficient Government, sympathetic to the aspirations of the workers, can remove unemployment or reduce it to a negligible quantity, abolish war, and in general can solve the many problems of the day *without revolutionising society; without abolishing Capitalism.*

Ramsay MacDonald, Leader of the Labour Party, said in the House of Commons:—

"We of the Labour Party are not interested in ameliorative measure prepared by the late Government. We are interested in the blunders of the late Government, which created the conditions

from which unemployment sprang." (*Daily Herald*, 24th Nov., 1922.)

E. D. Morel, speaking the next day, on foreign policy, is reported by the *Herald* as follows:—

"The present situation, said Mr. Morel, was the outcome of the errors and faults committed at Versailles, and the situation could not be remedied until those faults were remedied."

and again,

"The group system [of alliances] was responsible for the war." (25th November.)

If unemployment, which as a product of modern industrialism has been intermittently acute for 100 years, really is due to the "Blunders of the late Government"; if war is caused by a particular foreign policy, and not by the inevitable clashing of capitalist interests, then Socialism is unnecessary. But an elementary study of the working of modern industry is sufficient to show that war and unemployment are natural products of the capitalist system of production.

"There were misery, want and unemployment under capitalism before the exchanges went to pieces or the indemnity was imposed; and there will be misery, want and unemployment as long as capitalism lasts; but, at any rate, the people who run capitalism might make the best of their own iniquitous system, and not combine with the wickedness of the system the lunacy of making the worst of it." (*Daily Herald*, 19th Dec., 1921.)

The choice for the workers is, therefore, not between "the group system and the League of Nations," it is not between a Tory administration and a Labour administration of the capitalist system; their choice is between Capitalism and Socialism. The Labour Party by past actions and present declarations stands for Capitalism, with modifications perhaps, but for Capitalism nevertheless. If it succeeds in helping the capitalists to "make the best of their own iniquitous system," they will no doubt be appropriately grateful.

But is there any need, and can the workers afford, to wait another five years for an answer to our question?

Readers who find it difficult or impossible to obtain the SOCIALIST STANDARD through the usual channels should communicate with the Head Office, 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1, when regular delivery will be arranged.



**SEX.**

"The economic structure of society, is the real basis on which the juridical and political superstructure is raised, and to which definite social forms of thought correspond; that the mode of production determines the character of the social, political, and intellectual life generally." K. Marx, *Capital*, p. 54.

How many times have our opponents warned us that the establishment of Socialism would involve the destruction of family life, which, we are informed, forms the very basis of "our" civilisation and "our" humanity.

The inference being, that despite the refining (sic) influences of war, poverty, unemployment, and other vicissitudes of working-class life, sex relations are still governed by only the purest and most lofty of motives: In sober truth this aspect of their lives, forms one of the saddest features in the irksome sameness of the toilers drab existence.

Even the Press treads warily when writing upon such a subject, and reformers employ cunning caution lest orthodox respectability and conventional morality be outraged, and exposed for the sordid and mercenary institution, Capitalism forces it to become: Poets, artists, and singers have exercised their talents to the glorification of that highly developed human emotion, sex love; but does it require a profound wisdom to discern that, to millions to-day, the major portion of whose life is spent in the life sapping process of wealth production for the enjoyment of others, such emotions cannot find an environment wherein the most beautiful expression of such feelings can fructify: Fundamentally, the objective of such relations, must always be the reproduction of the human species, which implies the production of food, clothing, and shelter. Just as there have been varying methods of producing these things, so have there been changing sex relations in the human family. "We have, then, three main forms of the family corresponding in general to the three main stages of human development, for savagery, group marriage, for barbarism the pairing family, for civilisation, monogamy, supplemented by adultery and prostitution." "Origin of the Family." F. Engels. (p. 90.)

From the available information collected by travellers, missionaries, sociologists, and aided by the Socialist method of studying social development, as summarised at the beginning of this article, it becomes clear that woman's economic subjection commences with the early accumulation of property. The further development of property caused the transference of recognised descent from the maternal to the paternal side. This enforced fidelity upon the married female, though still allowing for irregular forms of cohabitation for the male. Concubinage or the sexual submission of female slaves to their owners, was recognised under chattel slavery. With modifications the "rights" of the ruling class over their economic inferiors, persists through Feudalism, and to this day, under the hypocritical guise of freedom and the monetary purchase of the daughters and sisters of the working-class. The workers in general accept the morality imposed upon them by the possessors of their means of livelihood, the capitalist class. "The ruling ideas of any particular age have ever been only the ideas of its ruling class" (*Communist Manifesto*). That the property basis of sex relations should give rise to a double standard of morality has ever confused our would-be moral reformers, to whom these relations appear as man-made laws, or sex antagonism.

But to-day, larger numbers of women than ever before must seek the labour market in order to dispose of their bodily activities, their only possession, to the class who own all the resources of nature, the master class. Add to this the economic inability of large numbers of men to marry, and is it to be wondered at that in the large cities thousands of women and girls, unable to secure the ordinary occupational opportunity to live, drift to that degrading cesspool of Capitalism, "The Streets." Even marriage, when the primary motive of the woman is the apparent security it confers upon her, inevitably leads to discord and unhappiness. Working-class life and "security" are incompatible: Too often, alas! it means that marriage transforms a bright and cheerful girl into a haggard domestic drudge, worn out with worry and anxiety long before the idle dolls and playthings of our masters lose

their bloom and freshness of youth; try as they may, the efforts of our reformers must fail, they can seek to "rescue the fallen," or extol the blessings of "virtue," combined with work in some capitalist sweat den, but while the same conditions remain which breed the criminals, the paupers, the millionaires, and those who must traffic their sex to live, in short Capitalism, their efforts cannot avail. The vicious conditions of life, whether unemployment, overwork, or the perversion of the most exquisite physical functions, have their origin deep in a system of life which we claim has outlived its usefulness. Our analysis of present-day society proclaims the workers the only useful class; when workers reach that consciousness, they will understand that their emancipation involves the emancipation of humanity irrespective of race or sex. Then women, like men, will become units in a classless society; wherein the useful necessary tasks of that day, will be undertaken by all capable, with the object of securing the best physical and mental development possible. Socialism will assure a leisured and bountiful life to all, because, even with our present powers of production, unfettered by the restrictions of trade and profit, and used with the object of satisfying all our needs, with the minimum of effort, wealth could be produced to almost any quantity we might demand. As yet, we have but scratched nature's skin; under Socialism the basis of our social order will cease to be a private property one, giving way to common ownership and democratic control by the whole people: Individual egotism can then be pursued through the communal welfare of all, as against the present wasteful competitive cut-throat methods of life. Under such conditions the strongest sex attraction yet known, mutual affection, will have opportunity of free and unhampered expressing, bringing forth a race of intelligent and beautiful men and women.

MAC.

**AN ECONOMIC CLASS**

is being held at

**17, MOUNT PLEASANT, E.C.1.**

EVERY THURSDAY EVENING, at 7.30 p.m.

**"FROM CROW-SCARING TO WESTMINSTER."**

(An Autobiography by **GEORGE EDWARDS**).

The Labour Publishing Company, Ltd., 6, Tavistock Square. 240 pages. Paper. Price 5s.

When a man fights for the workers as hard and as long as George Edwards has, he earns the right to have his mistakes charitably judged. Even if he turns and denounces men of his own class because they fail to follow his lead, one can endeavour to understand the bitterness of his many disappointments and show him the sympathy he occasionally withholds from them. This autobiography offers material enough for an appreciation of what an individual can do, and what are his limitations.

Born into a poverty-stricken Norfolk home in 1850, George Edwards started work at the age of six, scaring crows seven days a week for 1s. He had practically no education, but appears to have been gifted with a natural independence of spirit, and coming at an early age into close touch with the virile Primitive Methodism of those days, he soon developed the will to resist and induce others to resist the "tyranny of the countryside." His life is the record of struggles to organise the agricultural workers. Unrest was widespread in agricultural areas, and the demand for labour in the towns had set up a strong migration from the land. When, therefore, in 1872 Joseph Arch put himself at the head of a movement to organise farm workers, 150,000 men had joined various local bodies within six months. George Edwards became a member of one of these, and having learned from his wife how to read, and having gained confidence in preaching, he soon began to take an active part. As was natural, he studied the then advanced theories of Liberalism which seemed to him to contain the gospel of working class freedom.

After some exciting struggles, the continued drifting into the growing industrial centres of the North and emigration to the Colonies were reflected in a decline of interest in the agricultural unions. A partial revival accompanied the Liberal campaign for extension of the franchise in 1885, and Edwards then associated himself with



Arch's own union, and assisted Liberal candidates in Norfolk.

Then came a period of agricultural depression, which, with internal dissensions, led to the destruction of all but the Norfolk unions. Edwards meanwhile was diligently studying, together with many quaint theological works, the writings of Adam Smith, Thorold Rogers, and Henry George, and was learning that votes without the knowledge to use them effectively, merely made the workers "easy victims for the Tory Party." He realised, however, the necessity for political action.

In 1889, at the request of some Norfolk labourers, he formed the "Federal Union," while simultaneously other county unions sprang up in various parts of the country. Within a year they had 3,000 and Arch's union 5,000 members in the Eastern Counties. Again depression in 1891 and 1892, and the inability to offer effective resistance to wage reductions, caused dissolution of the unions. In the latter year, too, George Edwards fought his first political battle for a seat on the county council, and lost by a few votes. He was opposed by one of the Liberals for whom he had worked so hard, and this taught him that "they were not prepared to assist the working men to take their share in the government of the country" (p. 61).

The organisations were continually in difficulties, but in 1894 the passing of the "District and Parish Councils" Act gave new hope of salvation in working-class representation on local councils, the latter having power to let out allotments and to appoint trustees for Parish Charities.

Some labourers were elected and much time and energy was devoted to enforcing the observance of existing laws. Their enthusiasm led, however, to defeat at the next election, and George Edwards lost hope of advancement in that direction. Continued depression and the formation of a rival union by political opponents had by 1896 caused the collapse of the "Federal Union," its founder's parting words being "... my hopes have been blighted and now I despair of you. All hopes that you as a class will make any effort to lift yourselves from your downtrodden state have vanished" (page 86).

His writings at this time showed a remarkable appreciation of the real facts of the worker's enslavement; he saw that

neither free trade nor protection, democracy nor autocracy, monarchy nor republic, made any material difference. His outspokenness no doubt explains the ferocity of the attacks made on him by political opponents, and it is interesting to note that the line of attack was the same as is being used now: the attack on alleged extravagant administration.

In spite, however, of the lesson he had learned, he remained in the Liberal Party and advocated their principles for the Free Trade Union.

In 1906 the Liberal victory at the polls was followed by a general attack by the farmers, and again a move was made towards organisation. Although 56 years of age and too dispirited to face the task willingly, George Edwards began the work once more in response to persuasion.

Except for increased centralisation the scheme was much like the previous one, but it was realised now that more care would have to be shown if the organisation was to weather storms such as had proved disastrous to its predecessors. Slow but steady progress was made, and by 1909 "The Eastern Counties Agricultural Labourers' and Smallholders' Union" had 3,000 members and was represented at the Trades Union Congress. Some reduction in hours had been gained and the Saturday half-holiday was already becoming a possibility. Great enthusiasm resulted from a victorious six months' strike in Norfolk, through which 1s. per week was obtained.

Much ground appeared to have been lost by a long and disastrous strike in 1910, but actual progress was fairly uniform up to 1913, when successes in Lancashire rapidly opened up new ground. The harm that was done arose mainly out of the personal differences and autocratic methods of some of the leaders.

Then came the war, and, as George Edwards says, "I, like most of the Labour leaders, felt it my duty to do what I could to help the nation in the hours of need, etc., etc." This man, who had struggled for his whole lifetime to obtain for the workers the right to an existence slightly better than that of the animals, was afraid "that it would be the poor that would be the first to suffer should we be defeated, or should the enemy succeed in starving us." (pp. 190). As George Edwards knew well

enough, the workers never had to look so far abroad as Germany for those who would starve them. The farmers are doing their best to starve them now, in spite of Edwards' pathetic belief that there is a "better spirit" in industry. He supported the war, although for him "war" is a crime of the deepest dye against humanity," and on numerous occasions we find this curious knack of reconciling most antagonistic facts and principles. Before he would engage in industrial strife he sought biblical authority; he describes his father as a saintly man "who taught me the first principles of righteousness" (pp. 21), and on the same page records the fact that he "night by night, took a few turnips from his master's field!"

In spite of the brutal fact that the agricultural worker is now back almost where he was in 1914, George Edwards talks about "the wonderful change" and finds more comfort than I can in the fact that the farm labourer is "now qualified to be even a Justice of the Peace." He writes about the benefit of "collective bargaining," but he should know well enough that the Conciliation Committees set up since the abolition of the Agricultural Wages Board in 1921 have been a farce as far as the workers are concerned.

When George Edwards wrote he had not long been elected to the House of Commons, and felt a pardonable pride in the success he had attained after a life of strife and perpetual failure of one endeavour after another. What was more natural than that he should view the position of the agricultural workers somewhat too cheerfully? Even that has been taken from him in his failure to hold the seat at the recent general election.

The agricultural unions grew enormously in size during the war under the stimulus of labour shortage and rising prices, and later through the formation of the Agricultural Wages Board. It was unfortunately to a large extent a mushroom growth which withered away as soon as it lost its protective covering with the repeal of the Corn Production Act. To the extent that it was organised from above it was not permanent, and to the extent that its members lacked an intelligent grasp of the elements of trade unionism it failed to meet the shock of falling wages and unemployment. The idolising of leaders brought eventual apathy

and disillusionment to all but the staunchest. Agricultural organisation is therefore not in a promising condition. Depression has caused loss of membership, as in other unions, but probably to a greater degree than in most. Well financed attacks on balance sheets have not been without effect, and the formation of a rival "non-party" union has added to the difficulties. There is, however, an explanation and a remedy for these things. It is in the recognition that the members alone can make or mar their organisation, and that in their understanding rests the only ultimate guarantee of success. No merits of leaders can form an adequate substitute. The man who is honest and dependable will reap disappointment as has George Edwards, and the man who lacks some of his singleness of purpose will soon enough fall to the temptation of getting security by entering the service of the enemies of the workers. In the absence of an instructed membership, what is much more dangerous than disloyalty is the lack of knowledge. Neither the integrity of George Edwards nor mere sympathy and natural "fighting spirit" are proof against the subtle arguments of "community of interests" and the farmers' "inability to pay."

Men who clearly recognised the cause of the workers' poverty in the private ownership of the means of production, and who realised that the spreading of Socialist knowledge is the only permanent basis for working-class organisation would not have to go into battle with untrained troops, and would not risk finding themselves at the end of a life of ceaseless toil for their class, the disappointed leaders of a phantom army.

H.

### WHAT IS CAPITAL?

Dear Sir,

I should be obliged with your opinion on the following:—Is it illogical to say "that under Socialism we cannot or will not have capital"?

My affirmation of the above proposition brought me into conflict with a person who says: "Yes; you will have capital under Socialism." His point was that, scientifically speaking, the form of ownership of any given thing cannot affect its name which means or implies certain qualities not alter-



ing with ownership, i.e., the qualities of gunpowder, of a rifle, of an engine, etc., are not determined by ownership, but by function.

Thus you have now quantities of wealth reserved for the purpose of further wealth production (capital); of a necessity you would have this repeated under Socialism; consequently you would have capital.

Yours, etc.,

F. G. R.

The above letter was mislaid, and consequently there has been some delay in dealing with it.

Capital is not merely "wealth reserved for the purpose of further wealth production." It is wealth used for the purpose of profit.

To be strictly accurate, capital is a function of money; it is money which begets money; money invested for the purpose of bringing back a larger amount of money than that which was originally advanced.

The starting point of all capitalist operations is the investing of money. A glance at the prospectus of any company will make this evident. A long period of time, and complicated processes, may intervene between the original investing of the money and its final return, plus an increment; nevertheless the increment was the object of the investment.

The increment, or extra money, is the form taken by unpaid labour — surplus value. The cause of the production of this increment is the fact that the worker produces more in a given time than he receives for working during that time; in other words, he produces a surplus of value above the value of his means of subsistence. This surplus goes to the capitalist, as the worker receives on the average only a sum equal to his cost of subsistence.

Production of articles for sale with a view to profit is the basis upon which capitalism is built. Before this can become the rule, two essentials are requisite. First, wealth must be privately owned; and second, there must be a stock of free labourers on the market—free to be bought along with the other articles necessary for the production of wealth. The free labourer is a product of modern times. He is free in the sense that neither family nor territorial ties interfere with the sale of his labour power. He

is also free in the sense that he may starve (providing he does not make himself a public nuisance!) if he does not find a buyer for his labour power.

In past stages of social development, capital has appeared here and there, but only as the odd, the unusual element in production. Originally it appeared as lending money in the hands of usurers. It only became the social rule when a new type of worker appeared, who was bound by no feudal or other ties, and was free to sell his energy to whoever wished to buy. Capital is therefore bound up with wage slavery.

To sum the matter up: the existence of capital as the general condition of a society presupposes the existence of a class producing surplus value and a class appropriating it; a robbed and a robber class; a class producing wealth which it does not own, and a class owning wealth which it does not produce.

With the introduction of Socialism, the private ownership of wealth will cease to prevail; wealth will be produced for use and not for profit. Consequently wealth will not function as capital. The conditions for the existence of capital having disappeared, capital will do likewise.

There is a well-known case of a fellow named Othello who, owing to certain circumstances found his occupation gone. Pity the poor capitalist—he will emulate Othello!

GILMAC.

### IS IT WORK WE WANT?

"It is work we want, not charity," said a spokesman of the unemployed at a street corner meeting. This sums up the outlook of the average worker of to-day. He can see no other method of life than toiling or existing on charity. The fear of having to beg for bread, or go into the workhouse, spurs him on to find a job, though the conditions of work become ever more degrading.

How strange that such a view should find general acceptance among people already worn out with work; and at a time when wealth can be produced with such ease and abundance! It is stranger still that some must work hard and spend niggardly, whilst others work not and yet spend lavishly. If the former cease work

for a brief while they come suddenly to the end of their resources; the latter buy palaces and furnish them brilliantly, live in magnificence, and yet at the end of their days they are more wealthy than at the commencement.

Who brings the rare jewels from far lands? Who sows and reaps that we all may live? Who drives the flying locomotive, the liners, the great cranes, the electric plant, and the plough? Who toils in sorrow and wretchedness that others may enjoy the best fruits of this wonderful old earth? Who is this strange being that makes possible for others an almost unlimited pleasure, beauty, and luxury, and takes for himself what is miserable, ugly, and poor? Who else but they who are born with the curse of slavery upon their brows?

Day after day, week after week, and year after year, thousands upon thousands of human beings do little more than eat, drink, sleep, and work. To the mass of the people the solitude of the mountain pass is unknown. Each day they—the "lucky" ones—must be at work to perform their allotted tasks.

Is it a pleasure to toil until the limbs refuse to perform their accustomed tasks? Is it healthy to eschew fresh air and sunshine and pass the greater part of one's life in poisonous atmosphere? Is it intelligent to stagger with work-worn limbs and work-dimmed eyes along the thorny path of toil in order that parasites may prosper?

Through thousands of years a large part of the earth's inhabitants have fretted out their lives in slavery. Yet slavery, though hoary, had a beginning at a definite stage in the evolution of mankind. There was a period far back in the past when slavery was unknown. Just as certain definite social conditions in a past age brought slavery into existence, so other definite social conditions will bring it to an end.

It is leisure and idleness the worker needs (leisure to enjoy and idleness to recuperate), and yet he pursues work like a hound on the trail. How high above him, in one respect, is the "ignorant" savage of Herman Melville's "Typee," who worked little and laughed and sang long? And yet the worker does not pursue work because he loves the burden of toil; he does so because, as a rule, unless he works he

cannot obtain the wherewithal to live. It is not a fault of his, but a misfortune—he is born into slavery.

So powerful is the influence of a part of his environment upon the worker, and so heavy is the weight of more recent tradition, that he believes slavery to be an eternal institution. A mighty thinker of the past, one Aristotle, shared this belief; but he made a profound qualification—there would be slavery, he said, until tools and machines were self-operating. We are now at the period when this is possible. With a touch of the hand mighty masses of machinery are set in motion which perform astonishing evolutions and accomplish wonderful results. With proper organisation little work on the part of man is required to turn out vast quantities of the necessities of life.

Through succeeding ages, a privileged class has thrived upon the produce of an oppressed class, and it is the same to-day. In the past conditions were such that could not promise ease and comfort for the many, except where nature was particularly liberal and the population comparatively small. The needful things were produced by simple tools with much labour. Now all is changed. The needful things are produced by complicated tools with little labour. The conditions are such that they promise ease and comfort, leisure and luxury, to the many. But this promise can only be fulfilled when the many own the product of their energy.

GILMAC.

### VOTE SWAPPING.

HOW THE LABOUR PARTY WILL EMANCIPATE THE WORKERS.

"At yesterday's meeting of Inverness Trades and Labour Council, a telegram was read from Arthur Henderson, stating that in the absence of a Labour candidate, Labour's interests are to defeat the Government.

"The Council, therefore, resolved to recommend trade unionists, who numbered about 4,000, to vote for the Independent Liberal candidate." (*Daily Herald*, March 4th, 1922.)

"Widnes Liberals have decided to support the candidature of Mr. Arthur Henderson, the Labour Leader." (*Star*, November 1st, 1922.)



## SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain

## BRANCH DIRECTORY.

**BATTERSEA.**—Communications to A. Jones, 3 Matthew-st., Letchmere Estate, Battersea, S.W. Branch meets Mondays, 8.30, at 16 Creek-st., York-rd.

**BIRMINGHAM.**—Communications to L. Vinetsky, 11 Upper Dean-st., Birmingham. Branch meets A.E.U. Institute, Spiceal-st., every Saturday.

**CENTRAL.**—Membership obtained only through the Ex. Committee. Applications to General Sec.

**DEPTFORD.**—Sec., J. Veasey, 24, Marlton-st., E. Greenwich, S.E. 10. Branch meets 1st and 3rd Wednesdays in month, at 8 o'clock, at 435, New Cross-rd., S.E. Discussion after Branch business. Public invited.

**EAST LONDON.**—Communications to A. Jacobs, Sec., 78 Eric-st., Mile-end, E.3. Branch meets first and third Mondays in month at 141 Bow-rd.

**EDINBURGH.**—Communications to Andrew Porter, 12a, Kings-rd., Portobello.

**HACKNEY.**—Communications to the Sec., 78 Greenwood-rd., E.8. Branch meets Fridays, 7.30, at The Arcadians, 42, Amhurst-rd., Hackney Stn.

**HANLEY.**—Branch meets Mondays, Working Men's Club, Glass-st. Communications to Sec., T. Travis, 27, Arthur Street, Cobridge, Staffs.

**ISLINGTON.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8.30, at 144 Seven Sisters-rd., Holloway, N. Communications to W. Baker, 35 Alma-st., Kentish Town, N.W.

**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.**—Communications to Sec., J. Bird, 5 Wellington-avenue, Westcliffe-on-Sea.

**TOOTING.**—Communications to Sec., 3, Lyveden-rd., Tooting, S.W.17. Branch meets Fridays, at Parochial Hall, Church-lane, Tooting, at 8 p.m.

**TOTTENHAM.**—Sec., F. W. Godfrey, 49, Napier rd., Philip Lane, N.15. Branch meets Fridays, The Trades Hall, 7, Bruce-grove, Tottenham. Discussion after branch business. Public invited.

**WALTHAMSTOW.**—Communications to Sec., 11 Carlton-rd., Walthamstow, E.17. Branch meets at Workmen's Hall, High-st., every Monday.

**WATFORD.**—A. Lawson, Sec., 107 Kensington-avenue, Watford.

**WEST HAM.**—Branch meets Thursdays at 8 p.m. at 167 Romford rd., Stratford. Communications to P. Hallard, 22 Colegrave-rd., Stratford, E.

**WOOD GREEN.**—Branch meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month at 8 p.m., at Alexandra School, N.22.

### S.P.G.B. PROPAGANDA MEETINGS

#### LONDON DISTRICT.

**Sundays:**

Clapham Common, 3 p.m.  
 Finsbury Park, 3 p.m.  
 Manor Park, Earl of Essex, 7.30 p.m.  
 Tooting Broadway, Garratt-lane, 11.30 a.m.  
 Tottenham, West Green Corner, 7.30 p.m.  
 Victoria Park, 11.30 a.m.  
 Walthamstow, Hoe Street Station, 7.30 p.m.

**Mondays:**

Highbury Corner, 8 p.m.

**Tuesdays:**

Tooting, Church-lane, 8 p.m.

**Thursdays:**

Dalston, Queen's-road, 8.30 p.m.

**Saturdays:**

Wood Green, Jolly Butcher's-hill, 8 p.m.  
 Tottenham, Bruce Grove Station, 8 p.m.

## THE SOCIALIST PARTY

### OF GREAT BRITAIN.

**OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

## Declaration of Principles.

### THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain

**HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.

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[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.]

## SOCIALISM *v.* IMPERIALISM.

What is the Socialist view of the Empire? What attitude would a revolutionary administration assume towards the "subject races"? These questions are prompted by the perusal of a recently issued book by Noel Buxton and Conwil Evans, entitled "Oppressed Peoples and the League of Nations" (J. M. Dent & Sons, 6s.); and the following article is an attempt to answer them.

Imperialism, like a good many other things, charity included, begins at home. The exploitation of the workers of other lands and their political subjugation is the outcome of the system of slavery imposed upon the workers of the Imperialist countries themselves, by the capitalist ownership of the means of life. Empires to-day arise out of the necessity for our rulers to find ever new markets for the commodities produced by associated labour, and also fresh sources from which to draw increased supplies of raw material. The workers of this country forge the weapons and supply the rank and file of the forces by which the coloured races of India and Africa are induced to remain loyal to the British flag; while it is only their political support which places Imperialist parties in control of those forces.

With the development of a working class conscious of its own interest and its consequent assumption of political power, capitalist Empires will follow all other forms of exploitation to the limbo of forgotten things. In their place will arise an association of the workers of the world for the purpose of co-operating to satisfy their common needs and to establish the opportunity for the highest possible development of every human being, irrespective of race or sex.

The realisation of such a system implies, without a doubt, a lengthy process of self-education of the working class the world over. Even with the overthrow of capitalist authority in Europe and America, that process might be far from complete. But such an overthrow would enormously accelerate its pace. The emancipated workers of the West would be able to utilise all the technical and literary resources of their late masters in the task of spreading among the workers of the East the knowledge necessary to achieve the social mastery of the economic forces of the world. They would be driven to do so, not by any imaginary "humanitarian" or "philanthropic" motive, but by the same forces which had impelled them to emancipate themselves, their class interest. For the fullest satisfaction of human wants to-day the world is necessary. Therefore, Socialism cannot be otherwise than international.

The authors of the above-mentioned book are far from taking up the Socialist position. Their attitude may be gauged by statements such as the following: "The immediate application of ideals may not be possible even if a British Government inspired by good-will is placed in power. In all probability it will prove able to lay its plans for an efficient League of Nations, and for a general reform of tropical administration, but it cannot hold its hand until 'capitalism' has been abolished at home, much less abroad. The urgencies of the moment will occupy much of its energy" (p. 71). From the context and several other passages in the book, we are left to assume that the Labour Party is to supply the "government inspired by good-will," while "the urgencies of the moment" would



appear to consist chiefly of the "emancipation" of the Armenian peasants from the control of the Turks, and of the Koreans from that of the Japanese!

Details concerning the atrocities committed by these two Imperial powers occupy quite a considerable portion of the book, yet one looks in vain for any similarly frank attitude towards the methods adopted by British, American, and the late Russian administrations. Such incidents as that at Amritsar are very briefly referred to, while British policy in Mesopotamia, Palestine, Egypt, and India generally is whitewashed on the ground of the economic backwardness of the natives' social order.

The nationalist movements in these various countries are criticised for their alleged extravagance of demands, yet the economic explanation of these movements is left as vague as that of Imperialism. Nowhere do the authors clearly put forward the simple fact that capitalist interests dominate in the political sphere. According to them, it is the "needs of the world" which impose limitations upon the "national right of independence," while the nation in turn is regarded as a uniform entity, though they admit that the very "conception of nationality" eludes definition (p. 11). The class division in society is ignored.

As a remedy and preventive for the "too obvious evils of Imperialism" on the one hand, and the inconvenient "extremism" of Oriental Nationalists on the other hand, the authors advance the Mandation system of the League of Nations, with such reforms as would give greater direct power to the Council of the League. What appears to be lost sight of is the fact that no capitalist power can be obliged to "accept a mandate." It will naturally do so only when its interests dictate such a step, and the methods of its administration will conform to those interests according to the conditions obtaining in the mandated territory. A case in point is Tanganyika Territory (late German East Africa), where the system remains practically unchanged except for the fact that British, instead of German, capital reaps its advantages.

The fullest development of the League of Nations, in accordance with the authors' ideas, could only amount to the collective (and possibly more efficient) exploitation of the coloured workers by the larger capitalist

groups. Inasmuch as competition would be restricted, the political power of these groups would be strengthened as against the rising bourgeoisie of the East, with a consequent throttling, to a further extent, of the ever-expanding forces of production. From this policy the workers of Europe and America have nothing to gain and everything to lose. The elimination of competition among their capitalist masters means increased competition among the workers themselves. Their interests demand co-operation with the object of satisfying social needs rather than the production of luxury in idleness for a few.

If the Labour Party stands for the more efficient organisation of capitalist exploitation, nationally and internationally, that is one more argument in favour of our ceaseless opposition to that body. The above book simply provides additional evidence that this is the case. It is a good illustration of the extent to which "Liberal" capitalist principles are in the ascendant in the intellectual outlook of the up-to-date "Labour Leaders." From first to last, working class interests are away in the background, effectually obscured by the shibboleths of Gladstonian "democracy." In the view of the authors, it is the diplomats and not the workers who are the agents of "progress" (pp. 72, 73).

To the Socialist the practical problem pressing for solution is not national or racial, but economic and social, cutting across all ethnical and geographical distinctions. The class struggle over the possession of the means of production and the products of labour is to us the supreme issue.

In opposition to all this distracting talk about this, that, or the other local "question," what better answer can be given than that contained in the manifesto issued by the Socialist Party of this country on the outbreak of the Great War, in the September issue of this paper:—

"Having no quarrel with the working class of any country, we extend to our fellow-workers of all lands the expression of our good-will and Socialist fraternity, and pledge ourselves to work for the overthrow of capitalist and the triumph of Socialism."

E. B.

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."  
—Marx and Engels.

## THE EVOLUTION OF W. GALLACHER.

Once upon a time the Communists were furious in denunciation of the treachery and reformism of the Labour Party and the I.L.P. No abuse was too violent, and they translated their hostility into deeds by opposing J. R. MacDonald when he fought the Woolwich Bye-election as a Labour Party nominee in 1921.

W. Gallacher wrote in the "Workers' Dreadnought" (Feb., 1920), for the Scottish Workers' Committee, as follows:—

"This Committee is definitely anti-Parliamentarian. . . . We represent the revolutionary movement in Scotland. . . . For a considerable time we have been sparring with the official Parliamentarians. . . . But this state of affairs cannot continue long. We are winning all along the line. The rank and file of the I.L.P. in Scotland is becoming more and more disgusted with the idea of Parliament, and the Soviets or Workers' Councils are being supported by almost every branch. This is very serious, of course, for the gentlemen who took to politics for a profession, and they are using any and every means to persuade their members to come back into the Parliamentary fold. Revolutionary comrades must not give any support to this gang. Our fight here is going to be a most difficult one. One of the worst features of it will be the treachery of those whose personal ambition is a more compelling force than their regard for the revolution. . . . The official I.L.P. is bitterly opposed to the Third International, the rank and file is for it. Any support of the Parliamentary opportunists is simply playing into the hands of the former."

Later the C.P.G.B. wanted to get into the Labour Party and they began to drop their aggressive tone. Their application was refused, but they persevered with a demand for the "united front." They decided that it was necessary and desirable that the Labour Party should gain a Parliamentary majority as soon as possible. Any person with the least knowledge of the political situation would have realised at once that the greatest service the Communists could do the Labour Party was to declare open war upon it. This would have enabled the Labour Party to repudiate entirely the untrue but damaging charge of coquetting with Socialism and Revolution. As it was, the Communists insisted on supporting Labour men and must have lost them thousands of votes. W. Gallacher (the same W. Gallacher) ran as Communist Parliamentary candidate at Dundee. It was a double-membered constituency, and the only official Labour man was E. D. Morel, an

ex-Liberal strongly critical of the Government's foreign policy, and equally strongly anti-Socialist. Although Morel hotly repudiated Gallacher, Gallacher advised all his supporters to vote for Morel. Morel writes on this in the "Labour Magazine" (Dec., 1922):—

"Another factor in his (Scrymgeour's) favour was the appearance of Mr. Gallacher, the Communist, who never had the ghost of a chance, but who insisted on every occasion in trying to couple himself up with me, despite my emphatic declaration (and the local Labour Party's official disclaimer) that I was unalterably opposed to Communism. For his own purposes, Mr. Churchill also used the same tactics from the beginning. The result was, that Mr. Gallacher played into Mr. Churchill's hands; that many working women electors, who have no use for Communism, were alarmed, when they got to the booths, to find Mr. Gallacher's representatives coupling my name with his, and 'plumped' for Scrymgeour instead of voting Scrymgeour-Morel; and that I lost a number of 'silent' voters who, but for the Gallacher-Churchill tactic, would probably have voted for me."

In spite, however, of the unwelcome Communist "support," Morel got in.

Then only three weeks after he had been telling Dundee workers to vote for Morel, Gallacher expresses the opinion that "It is expected on all sides that there will be a split sooner or later, and that the Morel-Wedgewood crowd would go back to Liberalism" ("The Worker," 9th Dec., 1922). Not only that, but while himself a member of the Party (C.P.G.B.) which has defended its support of reactionary Labourites by the gag about the necessity for "unity," he adds:—

"This is a sort of 'hangman's whip' that will be held over the heads of the Glasgow team (I.L.P. men, by the way!). 'Don't split the Party' will be the rallying cry of the moderates, and it will be used to the fullest to keep the others in check."

It is always difficult to understand why some alleged revolutionaries will go to an infinite amount of trouble to avoid recognising an unpalatable truth. Although they cannot wait to propagate Socialism, they are prepared to go on for ever, alternately denouncing known enemies of the working class and supporting them for "tactical" reasons. They will discard every principle and make themselves personally ridiculous and contemptible by perpetual shuffling, all in order to gain something by manoeuvre which they cannot gain in open fight. They never do get anything worth having, and the working class have to pay the price of



failure in the despair of the disappointed followers of these blind leaders. The cause of this lies simply in their refusal to recognise the fact that Socialism cannot be won without Socialists. They shelter behind the excuse that the workers are too ignorant and foolish ever to understand their own interests, but, as Voltaire very shrewdly remarked, "He who dreams that he can lead a great crowd of fools without a great store of knavery is a fool himself." H.

### WORK OR TOIL.

A cynic has said that "the height of absurdity is a man running to work, before daylight, laughing."

The worker, having by his capitalist schooling and training been taught to believe it his inalienable privilege, his birth-right, and heritage, any attempt to dislodge his long-cherished affection for toil, meets with disapproval and a few empty phrases. Tell him that work to-day is mentally, morally, and physically degrading, and he will look contemptuously upon you. His mental antidote for such taunts is the one so popular anywhere but at the seat of operations, "Work, boys, work, and be contented." Point out the absurdity of a system that "rewards" a life of toil with that capitalist dust-bin, the workhouse, and though in all probability he glimpses the truth, through force of habit he reverts to the generally accepted axiom, "Somebody's got to do it." How true! But who's the "somebody" always? Carlyle's reference to the percentage of foolish people in this country seems perilously near the truth, when we reflect that it is the wealth producers (the working class) who suffer want and insecurity, whilst the loafers, *i.e.*, the landlords, the shareholders, the profit-takers (the capitalist class) possess the bulk of the wealth and consequent security. What a laugh! what irony! were it not for the resulting tragedy of it all. "Ah! but," says our work enthusiast, "the master works with his brain." We might appropriately reply, so does the forger, the burglar, and the bogus company promoter, but not producing and distributing wealth. Ascot, Goodwood, the Riviera, and such rendezvous keep our masters busy in their turn, and whether the season dictates that they shall stay in town or not, the workers will still be found in the factory, mill, mine, or office.

Neither the absence nor the death of any capitalist hinders the production of wealth. What do the capitalists do toward the designing and building of a ship, or the writing and printing of their own Press? Nay! even the making of the money with which they pay the workers? Nothing. Whatever the tasks or services, they are purchased by the masters to be exercised for their profit in that particular capacity. When a disaster or a shady deal brings the idlers to prominence, they themselves reveal this fact by admitting ignorance of the whole business. Do you think, fellow-worker, that if work were an enviable task, that you would have the complete monopoly of it? Hardly! The nice things, the luxuries, the best in food, raiment, and accommodation, are not for you—yet. For you the offal, the adulterated scraps, the shoddy uncomely clothing, the sunless sombre cities, and often an untimely end. What of your masters? Ah! the rolling sea, the blazing sun-bathed terraces of Monte Carlo, the country house, an endless round of pleasure provided in its entirety by you. Come! awaken from your slumbers, realise your manhood and womanhood, and organise for a life worthy of such. Work, in the truest sense, will then become a pleasure, pursued as a means to an end, the life glorious. To-day, because you are separated from the means of life, you are slaves to those that own these things. Work becomes toil, because it is to you an end in itself, instead of being, as we would have you make it, merely a means to our ultimate objective, happiness and plenty for all. Capitalism has solved the problem of wealth production. Socialism will organise life, and by using every means science has placed at our disposal to produce wealth for use, reduce work to the minimum. Man's requirements are microscopic compared with our powers to dominate the earth and its fulness.

Once you understand our position—and it is quite easy to do so—you will no longer demand toil and maintenance, a worthless objective, but you will organise to take "the World for the Workers." MAC.

Readers who find it difficult or impossible to obtain the SOCIALIST STANDARD through the usual channels should communicate with the Head Office, 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1., when regular delivery will be arranged.

### RENT AND HOUSES.

House and tenement owners in Scotland are squealing because the Government, which represents property owners generally, have not taken steps to save them from the results of their own ignorance and neglect. According to the Rent Act passed by the late Government, house owners should give notice to vacate premises when increasing rent. Many of them did not do so, hence numerous summonses for return of rent illegally charged, and a withholding of rent until the debt is paid off.

The Government is on the horns of a dilemma because relief has been promised to the owners, which shall be made retrospective. To break such a promise would, of course, be beneath the dignity of the "Mother of Parliaments"; while to make the tenants pay up would constitute a precedent and look too much like class legislation. But a virtue can be made of necessity. The Government could subsidise the owners or tell them to pocket their losses. Whichever course they take, the claim will be made that it was the tenants who were considered, because they were poor workers who could not afford to pay.

Obviously, while the Act is in force, it is up to those who own houses to observe it. If they neglect to do so, with all the advantages on their side of better acquaintance with legal forms, they should submit to the penalty without squealing.

Of course, all sorts of unpleasant results are predicted if the no-rent strike is persisted in. One is that house building will cease because no-one will build unless rents are assured.

High rents and shortage of houses are undoubtedly a real hardship for the workers. Though it is nothing new for them to be herded in jerry-built drums with little or no convenience. Hutches that let in the wind, wet, and fog, but keep out the sunlight. Back-to-back tenements and flats, damp cellars and ramshackle attics are quite commonplace as "Englishmen's homes." There is nothing new in the fact that families of eight or ten live in a single room and take in lodgers. Pre-war newspapers often cited such instances. Why the outcry?

The two things, shortage of houses and high rents, generally coincide. Given the first, the second follows. The capitalists

who are interested in the production of any commodity always prefer to see the supply short of the demand, because it enables them to raise prices. The commodity in the present case is the use of a house for a period of weeks or months. The house owner realises his cost of production by drawing rents while the house remains habitable. He sells, and the tenant buys house accommodation or shelter, on the same basis and according to the same laws that govern the buying and selling of other commodities. Supply and demand are responsible for fluctuations in rent, while cost of production is the main level between the two extremes. When rents fluctuate upwards, either the workers must have increased wages to enable them to pay, or they must go short of other necessities. Removals by night are far less common when there is a real shortage of houses, and private landlords as well as local councils invariably give preference to tenants who have a regular job with well-established firms, where they can be got at if pressure to pay becomes necessary.

The two alternatives before the wage workers are, therefore, to pay the landlord and go short of other necessities, or struggle for a higher wage. But this is as much the concern of capitalists generally as it is of the workers. If capitalists require a certain standard of efficiency in their wage-slaves, the latter must be fed and clothed up to that standard. The whole question, consequently, resolves itself into a tug-of-war between one section of the capitalist class and all the rest, the workers' standard of living taking the strain. At the moment the housing interests have the pull.

This explains somewhat the deep concern of writers in the capitalist Press about the shortage of houses and high rents. Until rents are reduced, capitalists generally cannot enforce the wage reductions they so earnestly desire without seriously impairing the efficiency of their wage-slaves. The agitation is on a par with the Free Trade movement of Cobden and Bright. The free importation of foreign corn was immediately followed by wholesale reductions in wages, because the workers could live more cheaply.

The capitalist system never did and never can insure to the bulk of the workers decent and convenient houses in which to live without overcrowding. The "council houses" are no better and no cheaper than those of



the jerry-builder. House owners to-day know quite well that overcrowding suits their pockets far better than overbuilding, hence the demand that house building shall be left to private enterprise.

What is wrong is capitalism: private or class ownership of the means of wealth production and distribution for profit. The workers do not live on profits; why, then, should they produce for profits? They should organise politically for control of the State machinery in order to establish a system of society based on production for use. Under such a system, where the people controlled production and distribution through democratic administrations set up by themselves, houses would be built when and where they were needed. The wants of the people would determine the nature and extent of all production instead of, as to-day, the profits of a ruling class. F.F.

### EVOLUTION.

Now that the principle of evolution has found recognition in practically every field of scientific thought, one of the consequences is that the word "evolution" has become quite common. But although it is used more frequently, the word is in many instances used quite fallaciously. It seems to be a general rule that, with the popularisation of any given principle or set of ideas, the student needs to exercise greater care over terms. Phrases too often take the place of thoughts, and owing to a superficial acquaintance with their meaning, they are often used to convey inaccurate ideas, and thus cause a great deal of confusion.

To divert from our main theme here, we may take as an example the phrase, "the materialist conception of history," which is often used in such a way as to signify that the economic factor is the only factor in historical development. This, of course, is quite incorrect. Both Marx and Engels in their time found it necessary to reprove those who were guilty of this inaccuracy. In reply to a student who asked the meaning of historical materialism, Engels wrote: "According to the materialistic view of history the factor which is, in last instance, decisive in history is the production and reproduction of actual life. More than this neither Marx nor I ever asserted. But when anyone distorts this so as to read that the economic factor is the sole element, he con-

verts the statement into a meaningless, abstract, absurd phrase." (Quoted by Austin Lewis in his introduction to Engels' work on Feuerbach, page 25.)

In like manner, to return to our main theme, what has occurred in reference to the phrase just mentioned also occurs in reference to the term "evolution." A theologian once described evolution as "God's way of doing things," and probably thought he had coined a fitting description of the term. One may see why many of the theologians endeavour to associate the principle of evolution with their antiquated creeds. When evolution was less known, its advocates were assailed by the dignitaries of the Church, as the enemies of mankind. Now that the advance of science is too strong to oppose, they pretend to see nothing contradictory between science and religion. Eminent divines, such as Dean Inge, Canon Barnes, and others, now claim to accept evolution, but explain it in such a way as to indicate that behind the evolutionary process operates "the hand of God," as though there were some intelligent power unfolding the movements of the universe. There are others who, while nominally having given up the method of utilising the aid of the supernatural to explain natural processes, yet describe evolution in such a way as places them among the religionists. Many pseudo-Socialists are in this respect among the worst offenders; for with them the term is used to convey the meaning that evolution can be identified with an ethical and moral purpose. The truth is that evolution is apart from our ethical valuations. When we speak of biological evolution, we mean a change in the structure of organisms by a process of development from the simple to the more complex forms—from what are called the lower to what are called the higher forms of life. The biologist, it should be noted, does not use the terms "lower" and "higher" in any ethical sense, but only to indicate a particular differentiation of structure; nor does he assert that all living things are constantly developing into something we call "better."

The sum total of the changes in both animal and human societies are expressed in evolution, but from whatever point of view we may regard these changes, whether we choose to call them "good" or "bad," evolution continues regardless of our ethical standards. Of course, we do not mean to

convey the impression that progress has not resulted from the evolutionary process; our purpose is rather one of guarding against any anthropomorphic conceptions such as those stated above. Those who assert that evolution can be identified with conceptions of "justice," "morality," and suchlike, either consciously or sub-consciously, imply that there is some "power" behind the cosmic process directing natural forces according to plan and with an end in view, which is, to say the least of it, absurd. To the student of the Marxian school the idea of a "conscious purpose" in natural happenings is a figment of the imagination. The constant development of the technical resources of production in modern society results for the capitalists in the ownership of a sum of wealth unequalled by any ruling class in history. Looking at things from this point of view, one can see quite clearly why the capitalists are prepared to shout about the blessings of progress, but to those who produced the wealth—and this wealth also includes the means of production—there is but poverty and insecurity of existence. So far, it appears that social evolution has not favoured the subject class in modern society. But, fortunately, there is another side to the story. With the evolution of capitalist society the capitalists have been rendered a useless parasitic class, they have long since been removed from the productive processes, the whole of the operations necessary to wealth production and distribution are carried out by the working class. This fact is slowly but surely finding its way into the minds of the workers, and will, when it obtains recognition by the majority, result in the establishment of Socialism. Marx and Engels long ago pointed out that the capitalists were their own grave-diggers, not from choice, of course, but from necessity. The evolution of society has placed within the reach of the wage-slaves the means by which they can secure their freedom from capitalist domination, and with the overthrow of capitalist society accomplished, the workers will have brought to a close the last phase in the evolution of human slavery. R. REYNOLDS.

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### COMMODITIES AND QUIDS.

Dear Comrade,

Regarding your reply to Mr. Archer, you say definitely that a sovereign is not a commodity, and you give as your reason that it can only act as currency inside the country of issue. Does that mean that a product of labour has to act as currency before it becomes a commodity, and if not, where does it fall short of being a commodity? In other words, could you clearly explain to me how to distinguish a commodity from other things?

W. W.

### ANSWER TO W. W.

A commodity is an article, or service, that is produced for the purpose of exchange or sale. Under modern conditions that means produced for the purpose of realising profit through a sale.

A product of labour falls short of being a commodity when it is produced for the producer's personal use and not for exchange or sale. Whether a product of labour reaches the position of currency or not has no bearing on this question. Of the thousands of commodities produced to-day, only one acts as currency.

With the changes and developments of society, the currencies in use change their forms, and, often, some of their characteristics. In the early stages a commodity in general use may act as currency, while still remaining an ordinary commodity. Later, when the exchanges have grown far more numerous and complicated, a particular commodity is set aside to act specially as currency and will receive some social stamp or mark to guarantee its genuineness. When it has reached this position, and only then, it ceases to be a commodity, as it is no longer produced for profit, but as an official instrument set apart for currency purposes.

J. F.

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**THE RUHR AND THE WORKERS.**

Since 1918 those sections of the capitalist class which have dominated the Governments of France and Great Britain have been at grips behind a screen of apparently friendly discussion. While each group thought there was still a possibility of attaining its end through the ordinary diplomatic channels they avoided an open breach. The French Government finally appealed to armed force, the ultimate and deciding weapon of the ruling class everywhere, both in home and foreign matters, and occupied the important German industrial area in the Ruhr Valley. Some attempt is still made to keep up the pretence, and Mr. Ronald McNeill, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, states that "the whole disagreement is simply one as to the best method of obtaining our common end," and that while

"Our French friends believe they can make Germany pay at once by seizing control of some of her principal industries . . . we are convinced . . . that such action will produce almost nothing in the shape of immediate payment, and will delay for a long time the prospect of getting money out of Germany, and possibly may destroy it altogether." ("Observer," 14th Jan., 1923.)

An assumption is here made which it will be useful to examine. It is that the aims of the French Government are identical with those of the British Government. Also no reference is made to the conflict of in-

terests which exists within the two countries.

Let us deal with the first point.

Up to 1914, next to cotton in order of importance among British exports, were iron and steel (including machinery), and not far behind was coal. France, on the other hand, lacked coal of a kind suitable for her iron industry, and had to import about one-third of the required supply; but she possessed big deposits of iron ore, much of which was exported. The war has altered that position because France has obtained in Alsace-Lorraine

"by far the biggest ore field in Europe, and the second biggest in the world, . . . according to Eckel (Coal, Iron, and War). In 1913, the Lorraine output had reached the colossal figure of 40,000,000 tons. The whole of that field, along with some of Germany's most modern and scientifically equipped steelworks, is now *entirely in French possession*. The addition of so much iron ore alone would have been little help to France, for what she needed above all was coal. That, however, was not overlooked, and the Saar mines, with an output in 1913 of 17½ million tons, were also handed to France; and, in addition, Germany was compelled to send France some 20,000,000 tons per annum for a considerable number of years as part of the reparations." J. P. M. Millar, Plebs., Jan., 1923.)

Saar coal is, however, unsuitable for cooking, and therefore "the Lorraine iron and steel industry is being kept alive on the coke coming from the Ruhr under the provision of the Peace Treaty."

Naturally, the French capitalists want the Ruhr Valley permanently, "especially as it produces not merely coal, but iron, steel, and dye-stuffs and manure."

This explains the policy of the French Government clearly enough, but where does Great Britain stand? The British capitalists went to war because Germany was rapidly overtaking them in the scramble for markets. Germany was already producing nearly two-thirds as much coal and more than twice the quantity of steel. Did Great Britain go to war to crush one rival only to raise up another just beyond the Channel? Did they (with the assistance of the Labour leaders) murder a million workers for nothing? The "Referee" is quoted by Millar as follows:—

"If the French plan were adopted, and France allowed to seize and exploit the rich coal and iron fields of Germany . . . she would become the dominant industrial power on the Continent. . . . We would be up against a powerful aggressive force in the international markets and be closed out of French spheres by

high tariffs . . . but we would oppose a new industrial concentration which would be distinctly hostile and detrimental to our industrial interests."

No, the interests of the French and English capitalists are *not* identical.

Now let us return to the second point, the relations between the working class and the capitalist class. The capitalist class consists of those who own the means of wealth production and the workers are those who, owning nothing but their power to labour, must sell this if and when they can find a purchaser. Having done so, that is having obtained employment, they produce commodities, the whole of which belong to their employer, who seeks to sell them and to get the proceeds in a convenient form as money. The workers receive as wages an amount less than the wealth they have produced, and the difference forms the surplus value of the capitalist class. Because of the growing productivity which comes with machine development, and because the workers cannot buy the whole of the wealth produced, and the master class cannot themselves consume the surplus, unemployment exists as a permanent feature of modern society. Because the world is becoming more and more developed on capitalist lines and purchasers for the products of advanced manufacturing countries cannot be found, competition between national groups arises, which is expressed in commercial and military wars for the capture of supplies of raw materials and for the monopoly of the relatively shrinking world markets.

What should the workers do when the capitalist governments go to war? What should be their attitude towards the French invasion of the Ruhr?

The Labour Party in an official statement:—

"repudiates . . . all responsibility for approving the policy now being pursued by the French Government towards Germany. It regards this policy as an invasion of a neighbouring State in time of peace . . . and consequently as an act of war. This invasion constitutes an attack on the self-determination of the German people, as well as an attack on the rights of the working class, who are treated as mere pawns or chattels." ("Observer," 14th Jan., 1923.)

This interesting declaration bears striking resemblance to the statements of the Labour Party's leaders in 1914. Under the guise of the same spurious internationalism they seek again to further the interests of the British capitalist class.

The French workers do not own France nor the German workers Germany, a condition they share with the working class everywhere. What, then, does it matter to them that France invades the Ruhr? They are wage-slaves all, doomed to toil in poverty and insecurity producing profits for their masters so long as capitalism remains. Does it matter to them whether their masters are French or German, Atheists or Protestants, whether their pay is in francs or marks? If the French capitalists plunder their German rivals, by way of reparations or otherwise, that is their business.

But the British Government does not want France to have the Ruhr, and the Labour Party, as usual, follows its masters; even after many Liberals have advocated entire remission of reparation payments the Labour Party still advocates making Germany pay ("Daily Herald" Editorial, 4th Jan., 1923), and fears that this invasion will "diminish her capacity to make reparation payments" (15th Jan.).

They talk of a "time of peace." The class struggle goes on unceasingly East and West of the Rhine, and where is the Government which can boast that it does not depend for its stability on armed force, and where is the Government (including the Australian "Labour" Government) which does not when need arises use that armed force against the workers? Is this peace?

In 1914 Mr. Arthur Henderson "appealed to every young man . . . to come forward and serve his country . . . to avoid coming under that iron heel of Prussian Militarism" ("Daily Citizen," 16/9/14), and now because the direction of British Capitalist policy has changed, this Labour Party, of which Arthur Henderson is secretary, wants the Germans who are "under that iron heel, etc.," to be saved from coming under the "iron heel" of France, our allies in the fight for freedom.

The German workers had no "self-determination" to lose. They were and are wage-slaves, and slaves are not in a position to select their masters, nor would it be worth while if they could. They can but accept the change.

As Mr. Phillip Price has pointed out repeatedly in the "Daily Herald" (e.g., 8th Jan.), the powerful group represented by Stinnes which—and not the German workers—really governed Germany, has long done



its utmost to get the French to occupy the Ruhr, and only opposed it at the last moment because a satisfactory agreement was not reached with the negotiating French syndicate. As for treating the workers like "pawns," does the Labour Party not remember voting for conscription during the war, and has Mr. Henderson forgotten his advice to the Government in 1917 to deport the ringleaders among the Clyde strikers?

As for us, we stand where we did in 1914—for Socialism. We declared at the outbreak of the Great War "that no interests are at stake justifying the shedding of a single drop of working-class blood." It was true then, and it is true now, that the

"armed forces . . . will only be set in motion to further the interests of the class who control them—the master class—and as the workers' interests are not bound up in the struggle for markets wherein their masters may dispose of the wealth they have stolen from them (the workers), but in the struggle to end the system under which they are robbed; they are not concerned with the present European struggle . . . for it is their masters' interests which are involved, and not their own."

### INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE.

Dear Comrades,

Re answer to Mr. Hart concerning rate of exchange in, I think, the November issue, would you be good enough to make it clear how the total figures are arrived at of the prices of goods exchanged between two countries; also to whom is the gold settlement made, to balance any difference there may be? The principal difficulty to me is the fact that it is individuals who trade and not countries. Also, would your explanation cover the fall of the mark in Germany?

Yours fraternally, ENQUIRER.

### ANSWER TO ENQUIRER.

When using the terms "two countries enter into commercial relations," we were using the terms in common use. Actually, of course, it is the private merchants, or firms, who enter into these relations and carry through the exchange of goods.

The difference between what is bought and what is sold is shown by the demand for Bills of Exchange in the market of the country under consideration. If the demand in England for Bills on French merchants was greater than the demand in France for Bills on English merchants, this would show, under normal conditions, that more

goods had been sold to English merchants, than had been bought from them. From this it is easy to see that the *total* figures are not of prime importance. It is the difference between the two sets of accounts that matters.

The gold balances are paid, usually, through the Banks holding the Bills mentioned. If the Bills have been bought by the Banks, the gold is placed to their own reserves. If the Bills are merely held for customers the amount of the gold is credited to those customers' accounts.

The goods passing into or out of two countries have to pass through the customs departments of those countries. The quantities, weights, and values, of the articles have to be declared on forms drawn up for that purpose. These "returns" give the total figures of the trade between those countries.

All these factors apply to trade under normal conditions. At present Germany is not under such conditions. The fall of the paper mark is due to loss of credit of Germany.

So long as people believe that the paper will be "honoured"—that is, exchanged for gold upon demand, or at a specific date—the paper will circulate at approximately its face value. If this belief begins to decline, the exchange value of the paper will begin to fall at a similar rate. This process may continue until, as in Austria, the paper falls to its value as actual paper, or waste paper. The German mark is nearing the same position, owing to the great uncertainty of the future.

It must, of course, be understood that we have only dealt with the main points of the question. To cover the details of the matter, particularly in the present exceedingly complicated circumstances, would take a huge volume. If, however, Enquirer wishes to raise any other detail question we shall be pleased to deal with it. ED. COM.

### THE OSTRICH POLICY.

Gentlemen,

Your issue of December, 1922, contains a vituperative article by J. Fitzgerald, attacking the attitude of "Plebs" on the question of currency inflation. (How it is ever hoped to attain the noble ideal of a Socialistic state of society by the use of abuse will to me for ever be a mystery. Lack of solidity within

the Christian Church has led many people to regard Christianity as false; a smaller number who have pursued the matter further have found that the lack of solidity is in all verity *due* to the falseness of Christianity. Lack of solidity amongst parties who vouch for the desirability of supplanting a capitalistic state of society by a socialistic one must lead many people to doubt the desirability; only a few take the trouble to probe the matter further and find out for themselves that dissension in this case is due to superficialities only, and not to fundamentals, as in Christianity.)

I write, however, to point out that your contributor has, in the instance I quote above, let his love of abuse over-ride his adherence to facts.

I am *not* an economic expert; but my reason declines to accept his contention that the total of prices of commodities governs the amount of currency required at any given time. In page 246 (first column), he states that a sudden increase in prices necessitates an increase of currency. Not at all; it is the increase in the quantity of currency, or *the prospect* of such increase, which causes the increase of prices. That is, the wily capitalist knows that (when war is declared), through an increase in non-productive work, and work on production of articles not for sale to the general public, the quantity of currency available to purchase articles on sale to the public is much greater in proportion than in normal times. He has a natural desire to become possessor of as large a share of this increased currency as possible, hence high prices.

What your contributor contends—that prices sometimes go up before the currency is available—is correct; but the prices only go up because there is every prospect of the currency being available. My reason declines to accept the argument that *any* shopkeeper or vendor of commodities places a price on his goods higher than, so far as he can judge, the quantity or immediately prospective higher quantity of currency available justifies. To keep within this maximum is his sole chance of doing business. If an increase of prices causes an increase of currency, we can safely presume, speaking generally, that the amount of currency in circulation will be gauged so as to just meet the situation. How, then, does your contributor account for people (during the late

war) being in possession of currency with which they desired to purchase, say, potatoes, butter, etc., when no such commodities were available, and there was no prospect of their becoming available? In other words, how does his theory account for the increased quantity of currency being there when there was no price to have caused such increase? The logicity of the reverse theory is, I contend, obvious.

Before closing, as a further instance of your contributor's regrettable lack of adherence to facts, I would point to his quotation from "Plebs" in column 2 of page 246, and his *misquotation* (from that quotation) lower down the column contained in the sentence, "And where in England, may one ask, can more than 20 shillings be obtained for the £1 Treasury Note?" (The "Plebs" writer says distinctly "gold £1.") Incidentally, I have never handled a copy of the "Plebs."

Yours sincerely,

J. HUTCHINSON.

Mr. Hutchinson open his letter with an entirely unsupported charge—that the article on "Plebs and Pounds" was vituperative—and follows by ignoring the facts presented in that article, claiming that his "reason" is superior to those facts, and therefore he will not accept them.

A similar policy was ascribed to the ostrich, but it always ended in failure—for the ostrich.

Mr. Hutchinson's question as to how the "theory" put forward in the SOCIALIST STANDARD can "account for the increased quantity of currency being there when there was no price to have caused such increase" contradicts his own contention that an increase of currency is *the* cause of the rise in prices. Our answer is that we do not pretend to explain non-existences. At no period of the war was the total level of prices *below* the amount of currency. The rationing of certain articles of food and the fixing of certain prices did not make the slightest difference to this particular point.

When Mr. Hutchinson is prepared to collect and examine the facts before applying what he calls his "reason," he may reach some glimmering of the truth. While he holds to his present method his quest will be hopeless.

The printer's error that Mr. Hutchinson



calls a "misquotation" (though it was easily seen to be an error by the most casual reader of the article) was overlooked until the issue was printed. The necessary correction was given in the January issue of the SOCIALIST STANDARD.

J. FITZGERALD.

### POLICIES AND PUPPETS.

A change in the personnel of the puppet group that moves in accordance with the string-pulling of the Imperialists who direct Government policy, may provide an excuse to introduce certain modifications in Government policy; modifications that have become necessary owing to new circumstances affecting the interests of this Imperialist section; but as such a change is not due to a fundamental alteration in social conditions, it has no important influence upon the general position of the working class, except in so far as better administration, from a capitalist standpoint, tightens the bonds of wage slavery and thereby worsens the workers' position.

The recent statements of influential capitalist journals bear out this view in so far as it affects the change in governmental personnel from the Lloyd George group to the Bonar Law group.

The governmental change in itself provided a useful opportunity for shifting the responsibility for working class troubles from the capitalist system on to the latest scapegoat, the Lloyd George Coalition Government. The international exchange difficulties, the Eastern muddles, the reparation squabbles, labour troubles are all supposed to have been accentuated and made difficult of solution by the blundering of the late Government.

The fact that these international squabbles, muddles, and labour troubles "we always have with us," in spite of numerous changes in Government and governmental policy, is conveniently ignored.

The "Observer," a Sunday paper representing the big capitalists, trumpets the virtues of Bonar Law and the vices of Lloyd George. Of Bonar Law they write, in their editorial (7/1/23), after laying down certain alleged principles that should guide England and France on the question of German reparations:

"Mr. Bonar Law has been guided by these principles. He has done well, and won the increased respect of all men at home and abroad by

transparent sincerity, good sense, good temper, and the quiet moral grit which has brought this deepening muddle to a plain issue at last. No one could have done more."

And what of Lloyd George? In the same editorial occurs the following:

"The Entente was envenomed and almost destroyed by pretences of agreement. . . . The direct and indirect consequences of the final fiasco of coalition policy in Eastern Europe and Asia Minor changed the whole diplomatic situation from one end of Europe to the other."

Bonar Law's policy has brought the "muddle" to a "plain issue"; Lloyd George's policy resulted in a "fiasco." What was the fundamental difference between the two policies? Lloyd George hung on to France as it suited certain interests to do so. Bonar Law broke with France as it no longer suited these interests to continue the alliance in its old form.

The group behind the English Government, having got all they could get by alliance with France, lately found themselves fettered by such alliance in Eastern matters and in their dealings with Germany.

In the first place, the early settlement of the German indemnity is not a matter that seriously affects the interests of the more important English capitalists. At the moment English trade with Germany is improving and would be adversely influenced by pressing for fulfilment of reparations. The following provides one illustration of this fact:

"Last year we saw a sensational leap in the figures of our coal exports to Germany, which rose to 8,345,606 tons, being nearly equal to the total export in 1913, which was 8,952,328 tons. The rapid rise in our export of coal to Germany in the last three years will be seen from the following table:—

1920	1921	1922
13,457 tons	817,877 tons	8,345,606 tons

"Even last year's figures are expected to be greatly exceeded in the near future, as Herr Stinnes and other German industrialists are stated to be in negotiation with British firms for the supply of large quantities." ("Observer," 14/1/23.)

The step taken by France has called forth certain rather significant comments. For example:

"Our hands will be free with regard to all the peace treaties. We shall no longer be bound by any of them. We shall have to pursue a quite decisive policy of separate settlement, both with Russia and Turkey." ("Observer," 7/1/23.)

"We at least have recovered our freedom. We are no longer involved in a policy that has brought Europe to beggary. We can at last address ourselves to the task of re-establishing

peace in the world. We have tried to carry out that task with France and have failed. We must look elsewhere, and especially westward for aid in an enterprise that cannot be discontinued if the white civilisation is to have a chance of surviving." (A. G. G. in "Daily News," 6/1/23.)

Here we see England's freedom from the Peace Treaty obligations heralded with something akin to joy. But the Government did not wait for the break with France in order to "look westward," as instance the negotiations that are going on between this country and America.

The replacement of Lloyd George by Bonar Law was the excuse for Britain's alteration in policy in this as well as in other directions.

As can be gathered from the statement with reference to coal, quoted above, England is striving to obtain a favoured position with reference to Germany; France is also striving for the same object. Apart from the question of reparations, France has another motive for invading the Ruhr Valley, as the following quotation points out:

"The real hope of Paris is that Germany, when fairly laid on the rack, will soon scream for mercy after the first cry of defiance, and that under French supremacy, political and financial, there will be brought about a huge economic combination between France and Germany, but chiefly an alliance of French iron and steel with German coal, coke and shipping." ("Observer," 7/1/23.)

One of the lines along which English "freedom" will travel is being indicated by the attempt to come to some sort of alliance with America and freeze out France. America is righteously indignant at France's action, and America wants to take a larger share in the Eastern negotiations (see the "Manchester Guardian Weekly," 8/12/22, on the Crane-King Report on Palestine), in which so far she has only had a representative with a watching brief. The following remarks on the Anglo-American negotiations are instructive:

"There are wider opportunities before the Washington negotiators. The funding of the British debt removes one of the inhibitions on American policy in Europe. Responsibility then rests more heavily on the two creditor countries for intervention of a constructive, even if limited, kind in Europe, where the course of affairs, without their help or influence, threatens their interests more and more gravely. Protest against the state of things which is developing will be useless unless accompanied by proposals for its remedy."

"England and the United States have a common interest and now a common occasion for action in this sense. It is hardly possible that the conversation at Washington will not broaden

out informally into a full survey of the immediate future in Europe. The British Chancellor of the Exchequer is there. Mr. Harvey, fully informed as to European conditions, and fully alive to the dangers now in plain view, is there. The risk, now immediate in Europe, of a decisive plunge into chaos, supplies such an occasion for a departure in policy such as there has not been since America took up Germany's challenge and entered the war." ("Observer," 14/1/23.)

Here we see foreshadowed a temporary bloc with America to skim the cream in European and Eastern negotiations. The two nations together make the most powerful financial and political bloc in existence.

The whole matter at the bottom is nothing more than the manipulations of certain powerful groups of capitalists for control of the sources of raw material (with particular reference to oil) and the arteries of distribution.

The policy of England and America scores with the majority of people on account of its apparent peaceful tendency.

Internally the English Government are in a strong position on the indemnity question. On the surface the French have committed what is virtually an act of war by invading the Ruhr Valley. So the English piously throw up their hands and protest their desire to "keep the peace." In this they have the support of "labour's opposition party."

The National Joint Council of the Trades Union Congress General Council, the Executive Committee of the Labour Party and the Parliamentary Labour Party has played directly into the Government's hands by its protest against the French Government's policy, winding up by demanding that the British Government "shall refrain from all measures of support or co-operation with the French troops in their present action," etc., etc. ("Observer," 14/1/23). Was this manifesto inspired? How the Imperialist group must smile! Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the Leader of the Parliamentary Labour group, was not behindhand in making a pronouncement on the situation. Speaking at Port Talbot on the 6/1/23, he said:

"Lastly, in our policy regarding Reparations, we ought not to be ashamed to let the world know quite definitely that we must look after our own national interests, and not sacrifice them merely to keep up the balance of an alliance with France or any other country." ("Observer," 7/1/23.)

A very statesmanlike statement, no doubt, but what has it all to do with the working class? Who does "our" and "we," etc., stand for in the above quotation? Evidently



the British Imperialists, as the workers' interests are not national, but international, and at the moment are bound up with such questions as unemployment and labour conditions generally.

The plain and obvious facts of the case can be gleaned from the statements we have already quoted above.

The different nations alter their policies and their spokesmen to suit the interests of the particular capitalist sections that predominate. The section served by imperialist policies predominates at present in all capitalist nations. This section in England replaced Lloyd George by Bonar Law. The position, therefore, from the workers' standpoint, is the same all the world over. That position is that the struggle over trade routes and exploitable territory, with coalitions and breaks among capitalist nations, is a struggle that concerns the capitalists alone. These struggles will continue to occupy the historical stage until capitalist rule is replaced by Socialist administration. This will come into being when the workers conquer political power and administer the affairs of society in the equal interest of all the members of society.

GILMAC.

### IS LACK OF WEALTH THE TROUBLE?

In this land to-day the vast mass of the population suffer from poverty and the evils that flow from poverty. Overwork, under-feeding, in some cases, endless toil in unhealthy surroundings, in others, the hopeless search for toil. This is the position facing the average worker to-day. Why is the mass of the population doomed to follow this miserable and toilsome path?

Is it because there is a lack of wealth? A few hundred years ago the needs of the population were met by a very primitive method of production. Hand labour with poor tools that could only be operated by one person was the rule. In cottages and villages fabric was spun and woven for clothing; the artisans in small rooms hammered out and shaped the metal for the simple tools, ornaments, and such-like; the cottager tilled his little strip of land to provide food for many; the sailing vessel went on lengthy and perilous voyages to distant lands; the townsman plied his little trade

in silks and perfumes from the East. Everything was simple and on a small scale, and yet at that time there wasn't a landless man in the kingdom. And they didn't work particularly hard in those days either—over a third of the year was occupied in holidays and feasting.

How different are things to-day! The application to industry of the discoveries of myriads of fertile minds has completely changed the face of affairs. No longer is the hand tool the means of producing wealth; no longer does the sailing vessel lord it over the ocean. If one wishes to see the relics of the older method of wealth production one must visit the museums, where they are kept as objects of curiosity and amusement, and material for the writers of history. These things have passed away, and with them has passed the comparative comfort that existed alongside the spinning-wheel.

The discoveries of new lands and new sea routes; the development of manufacture; the application of steam to industry; the ocean-going liner; and the telegraph—have made possible the prodigious production of wealth as we see around us to-day. How can it be said that there is insufficient wealth when on every side there is evidence of abundance. Machinery has made possible a production of wealth per man many times that which an individual could produce a few hundred years ago. That there is an abundance of wealth can be easily verified. The reports in the papers of the rich man's feasts; the dinners with choice and rare dishes; the balls attended by people in wonderful and costly dresses; the monkey's parade at Ascot, and similar places; the stationary and floating palaces; the company reports in the daily papers all bear witness to an abundance of wealth. Whenever companies increase their capitals by fresh issues of shares, these shares are not only fully subscribed in a few days, but they are vastly over-subscribed. There is literally money to burn among a certain section of the community. A glance at the position of the oil companies will show that their expansion has been enormous in the last few years. Their capitals have leaped up from a few thousands to thousands of millions. Standard Oil paid a dividend of over three hundred per cent. recently, in spite of watered capital. The cry of short-

age of wealth is obviously nothing more than a figment of the imagination, or a false scent to lead astray the unwary.

How is it that with simple tools and little organisation they could provide for the whole of the population in days gone by, whereas to-day, with complex tools and a mighty organisation, poverty is the lot of the mass of the population?

Investigators, who have lived among savage and barbarian tribes, have stated that starvation was unknown in such little communities, except in the cases of famine or some similar exceptional cause. Yet to-day, though the shops are overloaded with the things they need and the rich man's table is groaning under the weight of good things, thousands of men, able and anxious to work, are tramping the streets, starving, in search of the wherewithal to live. Poverty exists to-day in the midst of an abundance unparalleled in history. Why?

The food and other necessities of life, of which we see such a lavish display in the shops, are not there to be distributed to those who require them: They are exhibited for sale to those who can buy them. All goods displayed in the shops to-day are produced for sale in order that profit shall be made, and unless they who need have the wherewithal to buy they may go hungry, though the goods are going rotten for want of a consumer. This is due to the fact that the wealth produced to-day is privately owned.

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—W. TROTTER, "Instinct of the Herd," page 116.

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—HAVELOCK ELLIS.—*The New Spirit*.



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Victoria Park, 11.30 a.m.  
Walthamstow, Hoe Street Station, 7.30 p.m.

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**THE SOCIALIST PARTY  
OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.



# THE Socialist Standard

The Official Organ of **THE SOCIALIST PARTY** of Great Britain.

No 223. Vol. 19.]

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[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.]

## MASS ACTION OR INTELLIGENT ORGANISATION.

They say that God is on the side of the big battalions. This contains an element of truth, but it is not true merely because the battalions are big. If they happen to be composed of raw recruits who don't know the business end of a gun; don't know why they are fighting, and wish they weren't; and if the battalions are officered by men who not only think, like the Duke of Wellington, that their rank and file are "scum," but are also hoping to be decorated by the enemy for services rendered, then God will have his work cut out, however big the battalions are.

Of course few people now believe that God has any say in the matter. Lord Devonport was not really disturbed when Ben Tillett invited God to strike him dead. He knew he had the dockers cornered and could starve them into surrender, and Tillett plus God was no more formidable than Tillett alone. Anyway, Ben never meant Devonport any harm.

Again, when during the war Lord Roberts saw that the Allied armies were not delivering the goods, and that the geniuses of the General Staff didn't know what to do next, the country was placarded with appeals for prayer signed by that old hypocrite. The prayer was, however, wisely accompanied by a campaign for increasing the output of shells to strengthen God's hands in the slaughter of His other children.

The consistent application of the God-idea would be fatal to any human activity, and what is almost as dangerous in working-class organisations is a notion that they will win because they are big in numbers. This takes a variety of forms, but its gene-

ral result is a disregard of the actual facts of the present situation and of the necessity for solid preparatory work before the workers can take effective action.

The outstanding features of that situation are these: That the private ownership of the means of life by the capitalist class is the main cause, direct or indirect, of the remediable evils from which the workers suffer, and that as a consequence nothing but the abolition of that private ownership can be a solution. Further, that the capitalists maintain possession by their control of Parliament and its administrative, judicial, and executive machinery, including the armed forces; this control being buttressed by propaganda in the schools, the Church, and the Press.

Thirdly, that the overwhelming mass of the workers, although discontented with their condition, have not yet traced their suffering to its origin in the social structure itself, and are therefore not only unwilling to attack the capitalist system, but are prepared, as during the war, to fight for it, and, as shown at subsequent elections, to vote for it. Now, we want Socialism and we want it immediately, but unfortunately the majority of the workers are opposed to us, and while they stand behind the State in defence of the capitalist system we are helpless. While, materially, society has long been ripe for Socialism, we are forced to recognise that we must work and wait until the majority see that fact as we see it.

However, among those who want to abolish capitalism, who call themselves revolutionary, there are many who are not convinced that the relatively slow process



outlined above is necessary. It need hardly be said that if there could be found a method of reaching the same result in shorter time we would be only too pleased to hear of it. There is no question of sentimental attachment to particular means; any means are good enough for us provided they will serve the purpose; I do not propose to discuss in detail whether, and to what extent, the means and the end can be separated, although it will readily be seen that granted the overcoming of preliminary obstacles such as the conquest of power, the attempt at building a new society will be a failure if it makes exacting demands which the people are unable to meet. Socialist society can only be run by Socialists, and it will not be the work of a mentally enslaved people who have merely exchanged the blinkers of the capitalist politician for those of the professional revolutionary.

Let us, however, deal with the question of the moment, the conquest of power.

We have seen that the capitalists (or their agents the politicians), depending immediately on the support of the House of Commons and ultimately on the backing of the mass of the people, are able to decide what shall be done in any problem which arises. The Cabinet decides on policies which, if approved by the House of Commons, become law and are enforced through the Legal machinery. Taxes are levied for the up-keep of the State and its various departments. And all the time the law, the police, the army and navy are at hand to protect the private property of the capitalist class. Although they talked of disarming Germany, it is significant that the allied Governments never prevented their German "enemy" from maintaining the forces without which private ownership by the German capitalists could not have been protected.

It follows that the ruling class do only those things which they think are in their immediate interest or which circumstances force them to do to guard the stability of their system. For an instance of the first kind of action, it is plainly in the interests of the capitalist class to keep down the expenses of the administration, because it is they who have to pay; as instances of the second kind, it is necessary that the capitalists should spend money on the technical education of the workers in order to promote the prosperity of their industries and

to enable them to compete with foreign rivals; and it is also necessary for the capitalists to spend millions of pounds, as they are now doing, on relief for the unemployed.

If the unemployed received no support at all they would in desperation make organised attacks on private property, and their unrelieved discontent would endanger capitalist candidates at elections. Obviously, to leave men in utter starvation would be to force on them proof that existing society had nothing to offer them and could not reasonably demand their allegiance. That could but lead to rioting and disorder, which would make normal trading and commercial activities impossible. The capitalists give doles because it pays them to do so; it is for them a form of insurance, and a cheap one.

Various impatient people observing this, but failing to appreciate it correctly, have conceived the notion that at certain times of "crisis," when discontent is rife and feeling runs high, and when the minds of many workers are in a condition of ferment, it should be possible by concentrated propaganda, daring leadership, and inspiring example, for a comparatively few revolutionaries so to leaven the mass as to turn its energies to an attack on the system.

It is a plausible theory and an attractive one for those of us for whom the capitalist present is an intolerable burden in comparison with the possibilities of the Socialist future; but will it stand examination?

Is it true that at these moments of crisis the ruling class lose their grip on the situation? Is it, then, any more difficult for the politicians and the Press to keep the workers in hand as regards fundamentals? And have the revolutionaries greater hope of getting into the saddle than at ordinary times? To go no further back than 1914, were the workers any less ready to accept capitalism at war than to accept capitalism at peace? As Mrs. Asquith states in the second volume of her diary, one Cabinet Minister (apparently Lloyd George) was "intriguing with the pacifists" and would have led an anti-war campaign if he could have found support for it, but he saw that the war-makers had been fully successful and he discreetly decided to go with them ("Manchester Guardian Weekly," Nov. 24, 1922).

There were strikes during the war, and the Government was able to depend on the

great majority, including the Trade Union officials, when it threatened, and took, drastic measures. There was a railway strike in 1919, and troops were used to run the trains, again without any notable outcry from the workers in general. The Labour leaders called off the threatened "Triple Alliance" strike on "Black Friday," and not only did the mass actionists fail in their agitation, but J. H. Thomas and others denounced as traitors are now as popular as ever with their members.

Why did the Communists fail to make use of these opportunities when they offered? It was not for lack of will, certainly not for lack of screaming headlines and stunt propaganda. They failed because they could not compete with the capitalist Press and because they never succeeded in getting the workers interested in vital questions outside the scope of the immediate movement. On any such occasion the workers may be induced, or forced, quietly to accept less than they ask, but is there ever any possibility of their standing out for something more?

The railwaymen returned to work after a short strike because they were promised a part of their demands. Could one expect anything else? The workers are always robbed, but not understanding this they will not consciously fight the robbers. Why then, if they are driven to resist a reduction in wages, should they be expected to fight for larger aims against a condition of things they accept as inevitable?

As for the immediate aim, the capitalist class can, if they wish, yield and remove the ground of the dispute. In short, if the workers are only asking for some reform of the present system, the capitalists can always grant it or fight it, as they choose. In neither case do the minority get a chance worth mentioning. During the mining dispute some 60 or 70 Communists were jailed, yet no serious effort was made by the workers to get them out. They did not gain the leadership, and the miners did not get any concession.

If, on the other hand, we have to admit that the workers must want Socialism before they can be induced to fight for it, we are back where we started, considering how we can make the workers understand Socialism. But this is the method the minority revolutionaries have rejected.

During the last two years an old issue has

been revived, in the agitation for the better treatment of the unemployed. Attempts have been made to organise the unemployed, and have been fairly successful on the whole, but the old futilities have again been practised. The organisers of the movement had to choose between organising a few revolutionaries for a revolutionary purpose, or a mass of non-revolutionaries for a programme of minor reforms in the amount and method of unemployment relief. They took the latter, and have succeeded in winning some points from the Boards of Guardians. But have they achieved anything lasting commensurate with their efforts? They have added to the difficulties of the authorities, which was all to the good, but to assert, as some people have, that they seriously upset the Government is absurd. A writer in the "Worker" (20th Jan., 1923), signing himself "Hobc," gives an interesting account of unemployed organisation in Liverpool for instance.

It began in 1921 with a gathering of 20,000 strong, and a committee "comprised for the most part of Communists." There was a baton charge in September, most of the committee were arrested, and the unemployed turned a picture gallery "into a shambles." "From then onwards the number declined, due to the fact that a scale of relief had been granted, and that the spineless ones had got the wind up and left. We managed to keep a crowd of 10,000."

They again came into conflict with the police, and

"this gave us another setback in point of numbers, and the people left began to show signs of class consciousness. . . . They began to flock to the Communist Party. Very few stayed in, but those who left were inoculated with germs of the class struggle. Due to another agitation we were granted the use of another hall. Again, after another couple of months, we got notice to quit. From then onwards until about April or May, 1922, the apathy became terrible. . . ."

"The Guardians of the rich," seeing this, began to get brave by daring to cut the relief down. A few hundred returned and wanted to know what we were going to do. . . . try as we would we could not get them to kick. . . . In September (1922) they returned again. . . . The Guardians had brought in a system of test work. . . . The agitation became strong. . . . the test work suddenly stopped, so did the demonstrations of our organisation. The immediate wrongs of Henry being satisfied, he drifted away again. Thus the movement has declined, and hardly exists to-day outside of a small committee."

So much for mass action. Are these the kind of big battalions that will strike fear



into the hearts of the ruling class? We are often reminded that Socialist propaganda makes but slow progress. True, but that is the nature of things; and is the method illustrated above any quicker? If it produces anything useful at all, could the same or a greater result not have been achieved by a better direction of the energies that were thus largely wasted?

W. Hannington, Organising Secretary of the National Unemployed Movement, admits the actual impotence of that organisation outside of a strictly limited sphere, when he says in reply to a question as to the possibility of disturbances this winter: "The Government is straining the patience of these men, and they must not be surprised if there are outbreaks and disorders." ("Manchester Guardian Weekly," 12th Jan.) I suggest that the Government won't be surprised. The people who will be surprised are the unemployed when they learn how amazingly easy it is for a few police, or if need be, soldiers, to deal effectively with large masses of ill-disciplined and unarmed men. They will get cracked heads for their pains, some of them will possibly, in the words of "Hobo," be infected with "germs of class consciousness." But when it is all done, are we any nearer Socialism? When the long delayed trade recovery arrives, short though it may be, will anything be left to show for all the time spent on organising the unemployed? Might these efforts not have been more fruitfully devoted to giving them a real understanding of their class position?

It is true the Socialist Party has not succeeded in organising large numbers, but have the actionists done any better? We have at least assisted materially in giving a correct understanding of Socialism to a by no means insignificant body of workers, and we are still awaiting from our numerous critics information as to the means whereby men who have been brought together to "demand the use of the Town Hall" or for any other fiddling question of the moment, can be induced to fight for Socialism without understanding it. If they could show that they had succeeded or were likely to succeed, something might be said for the idea; but according to a Communist Committee's report, a copy of which fell into the hands of the "Morning Post" and was quoted by the "Star" (2nd Jan., 1923) the Communist Party during the two years of

its existence "has made no real progress, either numerically or in terms of influence."

\* \* \* \* \*

We are still only scattered individuals straggling up and down the country without a responsible hold on the working class movement." (I must apologise for quoting from the "Morning Post," but I, like the members of the Communist Party, have no other means of learning what new piece of buffoonery has been devised from time to time by the Communist dictators to disguise from their members the Party's futility.)

Again, the Communists who have been responsible for misleading the workers, by the blind-alley policy of the unemployed organisations now confess, after the harm has been done, that it was all a waste of effort.

"The unemployed have done all they can, and the Government know it. They have tramped through the rain in endless processions. They have gone in mass deputations to the Guardians. They have attended innumerable meetings and have been told to be 'solid.' They have marched to London, enduring terrible hardships. . . . All this has led nowhere. None of the marchers believe that seeing Bonar Law in the flesh will make any difference. Willing for any sacrifice, there seems no outlet, no next step. In weariness and bitter disillusionment the unemployed movement is turning in upon itself. There is sporadic action, local rioting, but not central direction. The Government has signified its exact appreciation of the confusion by arresting Hannington."

"The plain truth is that the unemployed can only be organised for agitation, not for action. Effective action is the job of the working-class as a whole. The Government is not afraid of starving men so long as the mass of the workers look on and keep the ring."—"Workers' Weekly," C.P.G.B., 10th February, 1923.)

Brought up against one plain truth at home the Communists turn to agitation about another side-tracking question abroad with similar failure.

While they and the other mass actionists, the Labour Parties, are both opposing the French invasion of the Ruhr and issuing clarion calls to the workers to occupy themselves in the purely Capitalists' dispute over the ownership of that territory, they both admit their inability to interfere effectively to stop it.

"Edo Fimmen, Secretary of the International Federation of Trade Unions, in a speech to the old Confederation of Labour Congress in Paris . . . confessed . . . the impotence of the international working class in regard to the Ruhr invasion. It must be recognised that we

have not been able to do what we said we would do."—"Daily Herald," 3rd February, 1923.)

"The duty of the Communists is proportionately heavier. We are the minority of the working class. Alone we shall perhaps not be able to prevent war. But we must do everything in our power, so that when the masses are dragged into the war, they will have a rallying centre in the Communist Party . . ."—(R. Fuchs, International Press Correspondence, 1st February, 1923, an official Communist publication.)

There is another aspect, too. These people always end by calling the workers apathetic. It is pertinent to ask who have done more to make them so than those, whether right-wing privy councillors, or left wing mass actionists, who make the accusation. They bring members into an organisation under false pretences, add nothing to their knowledge, take their contributions, and then abuse them because they leave in disgust when they find that their leaders cannot fulfil the promises which were the bait dangled to catch them.

It is not that the leaders necessarily intend to harm their victims. Usually, at the outset at least, they are sincerely of the opinion that the end having been achieved the means will be thereby justified. Our reply is that the end never is achieved. A little knowledge of the history of the workers' movement might save many such mistakes, it might also save some enthusiasts from wasting valuable energies trying "to get Socialism quickly" by this method. They should remember that the S.D.F., the Clarion Scouts, the I.L.P., the B.S.P. have each in turn beaten this particular big drum with varying degrees of failure before their present counterparts took it up.

They might also remember that apathy for the rank and file mean apathy for the leaders, and that with the passing of the conditions which temporarily gave the illusion of rapid progress the men who used to bellow blood and fire from the platforms of those organisations recovered from their intoxication. They became cynical and quite a number can now be found talking with their tongues in their cheeks, for the Conservative Party.

H.

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## THOUGHTS OF A SCIENTIST.

"I am not afraid of the priests in the long run. Scientific method is the white ant which will slowly but surely destroy their fortifications. And the importance of scientific method in modern practical life—always growing and increasing—is the guarantee for the gradual emancipation of the ignorant upper and lower classes, the former of whom especially are the strength of the priests."

T. H. HUXLEY.

("Life and Letters," Vol. III., Page 330).

"I have not the slightest doubt about the magnitude of the evils which accrue from the steady increase of European armaments; but I think that this regrettable fact is merely the superficial expression of social forces, the operations of which cannot be sensibly affected by agreements between Governments."

In my opinion it is a delusion to attribute the growth of armaments to the "exactions of militarism." The "exactions of industrialism," generated by international commercial competition, may, I believe, claim a much larger share in prompting that growth. Add to this the French thirst for revenge, the most just determination of the German and Italian peoples to assert their national duty; the Russian Pan-slavonic fanaticism and desire for free access to the 'western seas'; the Papacy steadily fishing in the troubled waters for the means of recovering its lost (I hope for ever lost) temporal possessions and spiritual supremacy; the "sick man," kept alive only because each of his doctors is afraid of the other becoming his heir.

When I think of the intensity of the perturbing agencies which arise out of these and other conditions of modern European society, I confess that the attempt to counteract them by asking Governments to agree to a maximum military expenditure, does not appear to me to be worth making; indeed, I think it might do harm by leading people to suppose that the desires of Governments are the chief agents in determining whether peace or war shall obtain in Europe."

T. H. HUXLEY.

(Page 323).



### ANTI-DOTES FOR DOPED NOTES.

"I am perfectly certain that there is a good deal of unnecessary unemployment. People won't work at a wage that makes it remunerative for anyone to employ them."—(Judge Crawford, Edmonton County Court), "Evening News," January 22nd, 1923.)

Yea! learned judge, but you are so vague and ambiguous, and in your brevity you omit any evidence for the above statements, a shortcoming with all enemies of the working class. They invariably make assertions as if they were undisputed facts which required no proof to support them. What, in your wisdom, fixes the limits of necessary and unnecessary unemployment? And in what category might we include those who "employ them," and for whom you whine? Undoubtedly in the former, in order to provide "them," the workers, with plenty of wor-r-rk, when profitable of course. How nice! How kind! And yet! despite such philanthropic sacrifice there are ungrateful wretches whose exorbitant demands make it unremunerative to employ them. At least, that is what you would have us believe. But console yourself. An enormous surplus of wealth awaits a market without the "increased production" of the unemployed. There is another section of workless, however, the master class, whose wealth increases despite their idleness and their riotous dissipation in every luxurious form possible. Harken!

"We are supposed to be crushed with taxation, and to be labouring in the trough of a great trade depression, yet all accounts agree that there has never been such a winter holiday season as during the last six weeks. The Riviera has been thronged with English visitors, there has been a positive rush to the Alpine resorts; at one moment the Continental trains were running in five parts, and it needed nearly a fortnight's notice to get a sleeping berth on any of the through trains to Switzerland or to the south of France. . . . money is spent lavishly, and whether at Cannes, Monte Carlo, or St. Moritz, the cheerful crowd of winter holiday-seekers seems to stint itself for nothing."—"World's Work," p. 213, February.)

Only an isolated illustration, but everywhere it is the same story, an ever-increasing abundance of wealth and a panorama of pleasure made possible by the workers, who, through ignorance, fail to see that the cause of their want, insecurity, and monotony of life, is the capitalist ownership of society's means of living. The

capitalists only allow these means of living to be operated when profitable to themselves, at best only returning on the average sufficient for a bare existence to the wealth producers. Nevertheless, whilst through lack of understanding the workers sanction their own enslavement, the knowledge they exhibit in carrying on the work of society, extended to their material interests as a class, will win them through to freedom.

\* \* \* \*

"It is our duty to make people fit to live in the world, and not to try to make the world fit for people to live in."—(Mr. H. Pike Pease, "Reynolds," February 4th, 1923.)

But the world is fit to live in, and a place of splendour and gaiety, for those who can "live" in it, for the small privileged few whose ownership of it renders the "existence" of the large majority such a joyless and precarious one. "Our" duty forsooth! duty between the conflicting interests of the robber and the robbed! Rubbish! While the workers look to their exploiters, with their agents, to alter the conditions under which they exist, they remain mentally in a condition to be deluded at every turn. But when a majority of them understand that society is not merely a jumble of unrelated incidents wherein a set of benevolent God ordained rulers permit them to exist, but an historically evolved stage in human enslavement that will pass like other stages have done, then, and then only can society be organised upon a co-operative basis that will allow the full and free opportunity for all to live. To talk of making people fit to live whilst retaining conditions that render life a hideous struggle for millions from the cradle to the cemetery, is to put the cart before the horse, in other words, to talk rot.

\* \* \* \*

"The more you try to get down to the idea of a Socialist State, the sooner you will get down to the idea of a first-class lunatic asylum."—(Dr. Macnamara, "Reynolds," February 4th, 1923.)

There now! the mighty hath spoken, just a bald meaningless string of words, the outcome of woeful ignorance or slimy hypocrisy. The State, like other social institutions, has not existed from all eternity, the long era of primitive man's existence knew it not, only the advent of property with consequent class subjections makes the State a necessity.

"The modern State is but an executive committee for administering the affairs of the whole bourgeois class."—(Communist Manifesto.)

With the establishment of Socialism and the consequent abolition of classes and class oppression, the function of the State ceases, its need is ended. Socialism and the State are therefore incompatible. Dr. Macnamara is a supporter of capitalism, so he assumes the role of Nelson, failing to see the obvious, the chaos of the system he defends, and by a sinister inference, imputes to Socialism "the first-class lunatic asylum" he pretends not to see around him. Let us quote one capitalist statistician.

"The great fact emerges that the enormous annual income of the United Kingdom is so badly distributed amongst us that, out of a population of 43,000,000, as many as 38,000,000 are poor."—(C. Money, "Riches and Poverty," p. 43.)

But the Socialist offers evidence that wherever the present system prevails, it is productive of increasing poverty, perpetual war, prostitution, and liars who serve the ruling class by the dissemination of written and verbal matter calculated to stifle working class discontent. The toilers, not understanding the ease with which they could live under Socialism, and inclined to believe that which comes from "great" men, too often swallow such trash. Potential comrades, "The great only appear great because you are kneeling. Arise!"

\* \* \* \*

"As things are, nobody knows what is the real cost of unemployment, and in what proportions that cost is borne by different classes of the community. . . . Not only are the workers taxed for the maintenance of their unemployed fellows, but also the incomes out of which they must meet the charge are themselves heavily reduced by the very fact of unemployment."—"The Cost of Unemployment," by Barbara Wootton, "Labour Magazine," February.)

Well, if "nobody" knows, there appears to be a spontaneous generation of knowledge on the writer's part within the confines of the same article, for the latter quotation contains a positive assertion as to whom she considers does pay. If by "different classes" is meant other than the working class and the non-working class, the capitalists, the only classes that can be discovered to-day, then her confusion is easily understood. Repeatedly in these columns we have pointed out, and demonstrated the fact, that the working class, being without property in the means

of life, must sell their physical and mental energies for a subsistence wage, to those that own those means (the master class). They cannot pay for anything beyond what they have received their wages for, the food, clothing, shelter, and small pleasures necessary for the re-production of their labour powers. Even in regular employment, December 31st finds them as wealthy as January 1st, wages presuppose a bare living. If this were not so, wage adjustments, cost-of-living charts, sliding scales, would all be inexplicable. It is only in form that the slavery of the wage worker differs from the chattel slave, and that is the money or wage form; both receive their "keep," and as with the slave owner, so with the capitalist, the wealth the workers produce is his. Despite the enormous proportionate increase of that wealth, the worker still continues his slave existence, and the expense of war, unemployment, pauperism and crime must be met by the owners of wealth, which is itself the proceeds of the robbery of the working class. Nobody who understands his or her position as a worker cares a damn about the cost of unemployment, it is the master's cost, and only concerns him and the labour frauds who bleat for their paymasters in company with simpletons lacking understanding. Both assist in fogging the issue—the conflict between masters and slaves, the class war, only the full recognition of which can herald the coming of the day of working class triumph and the Social Revolution.

MAC.

### BOOKS RECEIVED.

"*Decadence of Europe*," by FRANCESCO NITTI. Published by T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd. 10/-.

"*Economics of Unemployment*," by J. A. HOBSON. Published by Allen & Unwin. 4/6.

"*Decay of Capitalistic Civilization*," by SIDNEY & BEATRICE WEBB. Published by Allen & Unwin. 2/6.

"*Philosophy of Management*," by OLIVER SHELDON. Published by Sir Isaac Pitman, Ltd. 10/6.

"*England*," by HARRY ROBERTS. Published by The Labour Publishing Co., 38, Great Ormond Street, London. 1/-.



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**CONFUSIONISTS IN CONFLICT.**

In the February issue of the "Labour Monthly" the Editor, R. Palme Dutt, adversely criticises the Plebs' League in a review of their text-book on "Modern Imperialism." He says that the Plebs' teaching is merely a "substitute for Marxism," with the "essence of Marx left out"; that their "class consciousness" is "abstract," leading only to "Labour Party vagueness"; that "Promising young men are sent to the Labour College for two years and come back budding snobs and trade union officials."

He summarises the difference between the Plebs' interpretation of Marxism and the real thing thus:—

"Marxism interprets history and politics in terms of the class struggle. The British-American substitute for Marxism interprets history and politics in the terms of economics (an occupation favoured by many bourgeois historians)."

Palme Dutt points out that in dealing with the "deception of the masses" which took place at the outbreak of the war, the Plebs make no mention of

"the main agents which made the people fit materials for the great struggle—the social patriotic Labour leaders, whose treachery was the real collapse of 1914."

He partly explains this by suggesting that the Plebs do not care to incur the "ill-will of Trade Union Officials."

With his ridicule of "non-party Marxism" I entirely agree, but is he in a position

to throw stones? He is a member of the Communist Party whose "Two Party Marxism" is hardly less ridiculous. The Communist Party claims to be a revolutionary organisation. The Labour Party is most decidedly not a revolutionary organisation, but the Communist Party's "Marxism" is their justification both for claiming to be revolutionary and for supporting the Labour Party. It will perhaps be urged by the Communists that they must support the Labour Party to keep in touch with the masses, but the Plebs are at least no more inconsistent if they say they must avoid offending the Trade Unionists and Trade Union Officials who give them support. Anyway, some of the Communist leaders who now make this plea in defence of the Communist Party used to make precisely the same plea for the I.L.P.; and others who now quote Marx to justify their endeavour to get into the Labour Party, used to quote Marx just as cheerfully to justify the S.L.P. in keeping out.

Palme Dutt uses against the Plebs their readiness to quote from Walton Newbold in "his I.L.P. period." He implies that Walton Newbold has now changed. Walton Newbold says he hasn't, so the charge is equally valid against the Communist Party which now endorses Walton Newbold.

"I, like my comrade Saklatvala, am a member of the Labour Party. Either as a member of the Fabian Society or of the I.L.P. or otherwise, I have been a member of that party without intermission since the autumn of 1908. I have never had any cause to disagree with the Labour Party as such. I believe, as a cardinal principle of my political conviction, in the desirability and the urgency of all political power in Great Britain being in the hands of the Labour Party. I have laboured in season and out of season for the last 14 years to bring about that state of affairs and have rather intensified than relaxed my efforts since I joined the Communist Party in April, 1921."—"Manchester Guardian," December 7th).

Under their standard of "two Party Marxism" the Communist Party at the General Election supported just those Trade Union Officials to whom the Plebs ought not to bow the knee, together with people in their "I.L.P. period" who make Palme Dutt's blood boil; choice old Conservatives like John Hodge (O.B.E. and P.C.), Liberal Clynes (of "increased production" fame), and in fact all the men who before, during, and since the war, have betrayed the working class.

The Plebs have not exposed their treachery, but has the Communist Party when supporting these men advised the workers of their record and their intentions?

Palme Dutt should be grateful indeed that the Plebs have not done so, or some of the workers when told by Communists to support Labour men might have asked the reason why.

The policy of helping capitalist candidates into power in order to get "bits of Socialism now," or to prove to the worker that Socialism is not to be got either wholly or piecemeal by such methods, is so old, so universal, and so invariably fruitless, that Palme Dutt cannot be unaware of its absurdity. Why, then, does he turn a blind eye on the Communist Party?

Is there possibly someone whom he may not offend?

This tactic is not without its humorous side. One of the Labour Party's true-blue Tories actively assisted by Communists, was C. W. Bowerman at Deptford. Bowerman, according to a Mr. W. Taylor, Chairman of the National Citizens Union ("Kentish Mercury," 16th June, 1922), "had been communicated with and had promised to support" Sir John Butcher's Seditious Teachings Bill; and the Seditious Teachings Bill is a Bill for the suppression of Communist propaganda!

This surely ought to teach the Plebs how not to be vague and how to denounce the "social patriotic Labour leaders."

R. Palme Dutt, Communist, condemns the Plebs because they do not expose the men the Communists assist into the House of Commons. "Non-Party Marxism" is clearly absurd, but is "Two-Party Marxism" so much better that Communists can crow about it?

Labour Party vagueness is indeed the grave of revolutionary working class aspirations, but among the workers who reach that state of vagueness, is there really anything to choose between those who foot it behind the "headless horsemen" of the Plebs and those who come mounted on the "double-headed ass" of the Communist Party?

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**THE AGE OF DISCONTENT.**

In an age such as ours, in an age, that is, which is the necessary preliminary (long or short) of a drastic social change, there must inevitably be a distinct and increasing tendency for people to adopt a critical, to a large extent a negative, attitude towards all social institutions and activities. No matter in what sphere of life one may move, it will be found that the evils of Capitalism, no longer hidden, but becoming more and more glaringly insistent, are the theme for attack even amongst the most superficially-minded people. Among members of the working-class, of all descriptions, whether they be manual workers, on managerial and clerical staffs, civil and domestic servants, housewives, writers, artists, and scientists, is to be found a sense of dissatisfaction, more or less articulate, with things as they are. To-day, the commercial manager, himself usually as much a member of the working-class as his youngest errand-boy, has lost the sense of security he had a comparatively few years ago, when his position was almost considered a sinecure, and now looks with something like terror towards the results that will be shown on his prospective yearly balance-sheet. The clerks under him murmur in their usual semi-fearful way at the high cost of living and their decreasing salaries. Domestic servants are beginning to see something degrading in their flunkeyism. Every grade of manual worker is seething with discontent. Writers, from the hack-journalist to the novelist and poet, artists, scientific men, are beginning to realise that the work they are allowed to do in the world is branded by its usefulness to their capitalist employers; and some of them, at any rate, see nothing in their expression of their art and scientific knowledge except a prostitution to the necessity for earning a livelihood. In the most unlikely quarters and from the most unusual sources, arises a cry of discontent, of bitterness, of despair. Most of the plays worth taking into consideration nowadays voice a feeling of rebellion against existing institutions. The lighter entertainments are satires on the vices and foibles of certain sections of society. Novelists and poets in their writings portray characters and characteristics nauseating to the ordinary normal man and woman, con-



tending, with a good deal of truth, that in so doing they are only expressing the tendencies of the age. In scientific papers, scientific men can be found deploring the bodily, mental, and what they call "moral" degeneration of the people both in the upper and lower strata of society, and advocating in a half-hearted and unconvincing manner reforms for the betterment of the race. Publishers and theatrical managers nowadays find that the books and plays that pay best are those that attack some phase or other of modern society. With their usual opportunism and eye to business, they give the public what it seems to want, and what it seems to want at the present time is an articulate expression of its inarticulate acute discontent. There is, say, a reaction against war, and you have staged a play such as the "Trojan Women"; or a reaction against the tyranny and brutality of power or riches, and you get a play such as "The Cenci," or a novel such as Beresford's "Prisoners of Hartling"; or the orgies of a certain section of high society become a little too notorious, and you get the novels of a Stephen McKenna or a Compton Mackenzie.

What, it may be asked, has this to do with Socialism. It seems that these people are, in a feeble and unscientific way, following the lead of the Socialist when he criticises and condemns, scientifically and in the light of his Socialist knowledge, Capitalism and all its numerous and intricate ramifications. Unlike the non-Socialist, the Socialist has looked below the surface, has probed deep into the very entrails of modern capitalist society, and has found that the evils, which have now become too glaring to be ignored by anyone possessing the least grain of intelligence, are the outcome of our present social system. The degeneracy of mind and body, the misery of striving to keep up appearances without adequate means to support such appearances, the vicious and abnormal tendencies prevalent amongst all sections of people, the excessive amount of unemployment, and its consequences of poverty and degradation, the prostitution of a man's knowledge and ability and of a woman's body, have their present source in the capitalist system of production for profit, or production of wealth to benefit a small minority, leaving

out of account the vast majority of the populace.

As the ills and misfortunes from which the working-class suffer become less possible, and at last impossible, of being hidden away, as they grow less susceptible to the "dope" and narcotics emanating from the Press, the pulpit and the platform, the expressions of discontent and rebellion—always lying dormant in a social system such as the present one—increase in volume and intensity. But, apart from the Socialist, none of these people, whether writer or artist, scientist or "man-in-the-street," however loudly he may voice his dissatisfaction with things as they are, has either the courage or the ability to put forward a constructive policy to take effect when Capitalism falls.

The non-Socialists see certain evils in the world, evils which grow more glaring as the years pass, and all they can do is to say in effect, "Let us destroy these abominable evils, and if, in doing so, we, at the same time, destroy associations of peoples, even if we thereby wipe out mankind itself; better chaos or annihilation, than the degradation and prostitution of life as it is to-day." The Socialist, however, has no desire for social chaos or atavism, or total annihilation; these visions of despair would drift into nothingness if people could only be brought to understand—to understand themselves and the social system under which they live and which makes them the unhappy beings that they are. We are endeavouring to give to our non-Socialist fellow-workers an exposition of life as it now is, as it might soon be, and as eventually it will be. What we desire is a sane and healthy system of society, to be erected on the dead ashes of the system which is passing, wherein no man shall be called upon to sacrifice his ability and no woman her body in order to obtain the wherewithal to live; wherein the workman, the artist, the scientist (possibly a trinity in one person) may unite with, and dovetail into, one another, in the production of wealth, which would be the property of an appreciative and enlightened humanity; not, as now, the property of a few unworthy and unappreciative parasites.

F. J. WEBB.

## THE COMMUNE OF PARIS, 1871.

To all Socialists throughout the world, the 18th of March recalls to their minds the first organised attempt on the part of a section of the working class to administer the affairs of society in the workers' interest. We speak of the Commune of Paris in 1871.

To convey a clear understanding of the Commune, it is necessary to give a brief outline of some of the events which led to the uprising of the Parisian workers on the 18th of March, 1871.

In 1849, an enterprising gentleman, named Louis Bonaparte, nephew of the first Napoleon, was elected President of the French Republic, and three years later he was proclaimed Emperor of the Second Empire.

For the events which enabled Bonaparte and his gang of hangers-on to become masters of France, readers are referred to Marx's brilliant and profound monograph, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte."

Of the establishment of the Second Empire, Engels says "that meant the appeal to French chauvinism, which implied the demand for the reacquisition of the frontier of the First Empire lost in 1814." The existing frontier no longer satisfied the requirements of the Jingoists, in view of the fact that during the Bonapartist régime France had experienced a rapid industrial development. To the French ruling class the redeeming feature of the Bonapartist Government was its policy which favoured speculation and industrial activity, resulting for them in enrichment to a hitherto unheard of degree. Industrial expansion made necessary occasional wars and extensions of frontier, and the frontier which most interested the French Chauvinists was the left bank of the Rhine.

Gradually a growing section of the ruling class began more and more to express their dissatisfaction with the foreign and domestic policy of Bonaparte; whilst on the other hand, the discontent of the workers manifested itself in a way disturbing to the peace of mind, of not only the section of the ruling class opposed to Bonaparte, but to Bonaparte himself.

Among the workers, an organisation called the International Working Men's

Association, founded by Marx and Engels in 1864, was carrying on an agitation throughout Europe; and in France, the agitation was such, that Bonaparte had 60 of its most active members arrested.

Thus, confronted with the growing unpopularity among the ruling class, and fearing an uprising of the workers, Bonaparte sought refuge in satisfying the aspirations of the French Jingoists by declaring war on Prussia on the 15th of July, 1870. But the war proved disastrous for France. After various encounters, one French Army was driven into Sedan, where Bonaparte, with 80,000 men, surrendered. After this, battle after battle was lost by the French. Even the new Army under Marshal Bazaine, which had been raised to stave off the march of the Prussians on Paris, was surrounded at Metz, where Bazaine, with 180,000 men, surrendered.

As a consequence of the first great defeat at Sedan, an uprising occurred in Paris on the 4th of September, 1870, which sounded the death-knell of the Second Empire. The Republic was again proclaimed, and Thiers, who had been a statesman under the old Monarchy of Louis Philippe, was appointed as its head.

During the war, the mass of the workers, like the great bulk of the workers during the late European war, were stupid enough to interest themselves in a quarrel which was entirely a quarrel between rival groups of the ruling class. Consequently, what was uppermost in the minds of the Parisians, was to organise a resistance against the Prussians, who were now on their way to besiege the city. The bulk of the Parisians believed in the possibility of successfully defending Paris, and the Thiers' Government accepted a mandate from them to act as the "government of defence." For the purpose of defending Paris all Parisians capable of bearing arms were armed and enrolled in the National Guard, which was composed mainly of working men.

Towards the end of September the Prussians began their siege of Paris, and it soon became evident to many that the Government was not treating seriously the question of defence. The fact is, that the matter of the defence of Paris was treated as a huge joke by the Thiers' Government, and is described by Marx as "a well



understood mockery of defence." The evidence of this fact was left in the hands of the Commune when the Government made its wild flight to Versailles after the 18th of March.

As indicated above, we do not approve the action of the Parisians in demanding the continuance of the war; but even so, that in no way excuses the "government of defence" in not seriously acting in line with the mandate it had accepted to effectively defend Paris, which is one illustration of the contempt that all Capitalist Governments have for the views of the great bulk of those who elect them to power.

Of course, the Thiers' Government had reasons of its own for disregarding the mandate. What Thiers and his gang were really desirous of defending Paris against was, not the Prussians, but the armed working men of Paris.

"Paris armed, was the revolution armed," says Marx; and Thiers did not fail to note this significant fact.

The year 1871 opened with Paris still a besieged city, and finally on the 28th of January, it being no longer possible to carry on the farce of "defence," the French Government capitulated to Bismark.

Engels, in his introduction to Marx's "Civil War in France," points out that when the Prussians entered Paris they found themselves surrounded by armed workmen, "who carefully watched lest any 'Prussian' should overstep the narrow limits of the quarter reserved for the foreign conqueror."

How to disarm these workmen was the immediate problem set before Thiers. To accomplish this Thiers, with the flagrant lie on his lips that the arms of the National Guard were State property, called upon the National Guard to give up their artillery. Of course, Thiers knew well that the arms of the Guards were their own property; they were bought by themselves by means of public subscriptions; moreover, they were officially recognised as their property in the terms of the capitulation of Paris. This move on the part of Thiers to get the National Guard to surrender their arms having failed, he next tried more forcible means.

Accordingly, Thiers dispatched a few regiments of the line to Montmartre to steal the artillery. With the usual display of "directive ability," those responsible for the organisation to take the guns had failed to provide adequate means of transport. When the troops secured the guns the lack of transport prevented them from proceeding far, before the move became known. It is said that the women were the first to act, calling upon the troops to leave the guns alone. Meanwhile, the news having spread, some of the National Guard appeared on the scene accompanied by women and children. Several times did General Lecomte give the order for his men to fire upon the defenceless women and children, but each time his order was disregarded. The few stragglers of the National Guard, with the women and children seeing this, pushed forward, and fraternised with the troops. The attempt to steal the guns had failed.

In vain did Thiers appeal to the Parisians to stand by "law and order," for out of 300,000 National Guards only a few hundred could be found to rally to his support. Small wonder that they did not do so, for in addition to enduring the hardships of the 131 days siege of Paris, the Thiers' Government had stopped the pay of the National Guard. Thus, were they and their dependents faced with starvation.

From the time that Thiers had failed to disarm the National Guard on the 18th of March, the workers had assumed control of Paris. The Thiers' Government in the meantime had fled to Versailles.

On the 26th of March, the Paris Commune was elected and proclaimed on the 28th.

The workers had thereby committed a "crime"—the worst of all possible crimes in the eyes of the ruling class—"the violation of the sacred rights of private property."

It cannot be said that the revolt of the Parisian workers was a Socialist Revolution, as only a few of those who took part in the movement had any Socialist knowledge. But considering the suddenness with which they were called upon to act, it must be ungrudgingly granted that the workers of Paris acquitted themselves wonderfully. Mistakes they made, of course, as they were sure to do, consider-

ing the circumstances which surrounded the movement.

The Commune accomplished many fine acts of legislation. It abolished the conscription and standing army, the only force recognised being the National Guard. All rents of dwellings from October, 1870, to April, 1871, were remitted, such rent as had been paid to be deducted from future payments. Its labour department brought about the abolition of night work for bakers, and declared all fines and stoppages from wages illegal. The fact that "foreigners" were elected to the Commune, shows the international outlook of many of the Communards. The "superior officials" who had acted under the Thiers and Napoleonic Governments having made off to Versailles, the control of nearly all the public services was in the hands of workmen administrators, placed there by the Commune.

What was Paris like during the short period of the workers' control of affairs? Belfort Bax, in his admirable "Short History of the Commune," tells us that the city was quiet, peaceful, and wholly free from crime. Even many middle-class Englishmen, who had no sympathy with the Commune, reluctantly testified to the orderly and peaceful manner in which the Communards carried out the duties of citizenship. While the Versailles publications were demanding the wholesale slaughter of the Parisians, one could look in vain through the revolutionary journals for any blood-thirsty suggestion.

The people's Paris of 1871 was a model against which no city throughout capitalist civilisation could compare. The wants of the populace were attended to, as best they could in the circumstances. For the "crime" of having attacked the private property institution, Thiers and his blood-thirsty gang at Versailles were planning to deluge Paris in a sea of blood.

We have said that the Commune made many mistakes, and one important mistake was its treatment of the military side of its administration. Of all the departments controlled by the Commune, the department of war was the worst conducted. Having made the initial blunder of allowing the Thiers' Government to escape from Paris, one would imagine that

they would have prepared for an attack from Thiers later. Instead, the Commune spent its time in futile attempts to negotiate with Thiers, which the latter gladly protracted till he had made arrangements with Bismark for the delivery of the French troops, taken as prisoners during the war. Thiers would hear of no compromise with the Commune, nothing but the unconstitutional surrender of Paris would meet his requirements.

Accordingly, on the 1st of April, without any warning, the Versailles opened fire on Paris. It was then that the lack of military preparation on the part of the Commune came into prominence. The requisites of war were at places other than where they should have been. Important points of defence were discovered to be undefended. It seems that some of the leaders of the Commune thought that the Versailles would refuse to fire upon the Parisians as had happened on the 18th of March. On this point Belfort Bax well says, they forgot

"that insubordination in the interior of a fortress is a very different thing from insubordination in the open street under the moral pressure of a sympathetic crowd ready to protect the insubordinate from the vengeance of their superior officers."

The time for the Commune to organise an effective defence of Paris had now gone. Strenuous efforts were made, but all was in vain. We could go on to tell of the wonderful acts of heroism. Men, women, and even children, took their part in the fight to defend the Commune. But space does not permit.

Finally, on the 21st of May, the forces of Thiers entered Paris. He had demanded the blood of the Parisians, and the time had now arrived for he and his gang to execute their evil designs of butchery in which they were ably assisted by the much "hated" Prussian, Bismark.

"Twenty-five thousand men, women and children killed during the battle and after; three thousand at least dead in the prisons, the pontoons, the forts, or in consequence of maladies contracted during their captivity; thirteen thousand seven hundred condemned, most of them for life; seventy thousand women, children and old men deprived of their natural supporters, or thrown out of France; one hundred and eleven thousand victims at least—that is the balance-sheet of the bourgeois vengeance for the solitary insurrection of the 18th of March."

So writes M. Lissagary, the author of the



"History of the Commune," who himself took part in the struggle.

Lest it be said that we are taking the evidence of a partial witness, we will give one quotation from the capitalist press of the time.

"As many as one thousand Communists were shot after their capture (June 1st). . . . Human life has become so cheap that a man is shot more readily than a dog. Summary executions are still (long after the fighting had ceased) going on wholesale."—"Times," May-June, 1871.

Such was the fury of the bourgeois butchers under the leadership of Thiers. No deed was too foul for them to perpetrate upon their defenceless victims.

As Socialists, we are pleased to commemorate the Commune of Paris; it demonstrated to the world, in spite of its many blunders that the workers can, when given a favourable opportunity, control the affairs of society, not only without the aid of the ruling class, but the better for its absence; a fact which unquestionably added to the fury of the French ruling class.

The great value the Commune has for the workers to-day is the lesson they can draw therefrom. The Commune served to bring out the reality of the class struggle, and the ruthlessness of the ruling class when their system, the private property institution, is attacked.

Far too much of that abstraction "Humanity" seemed to characterise the Communards, they treated their bourgeois enemies far too lightly, and too kindly; every act of kindness shown by the Communards, being treated by Thiers as an act of weakness, serving to encourage him in his foul treatment of the Parisians.

If heroism and devotion to the ideal of human solidarity could accomplish anything in themselves, a different tale of the Commune would have to be told, but without sound organisation these will achieve but little.

Not the least of the factors which aided the destruction of the Commune was the mixed elements which composed it.

The Commune, like many other attempts on the part of the workers, demonstrates the absolute necessity for a sound, well-disciplined organisation, understanding, and ready to meet the requirements of the situation. The Socialist Party of Great Britain fulfils the requirement. We

steadily point out to the workers the cause of their troubles, and the futility of their many attempts to remove them. The workers must cease to trust in "leaders," particularly those of the "intellectual minority" type, for this same type of "leader" was known to the Commune.

In conclusion, let us hope that the time is not far distant when the workers sound in their understanding and strong in their determination will arise to avenge their fellows of the Commune, by overthrowing capitalist society and inaugurating the Socialist Commonwealth. R. REYNOLDS.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

Dear Sirs,—Could you please answer these questions below, in order to clear up a great deal of misunderstanding?

1. When is the value of a commodity determined?
2. Can additional value be added to the commodity in the process of distribution?
3. Has distribution any determining factor in the value of a commodity?

S. FELPERIN.

A commodity is a useful article produced for exchange. It is the result of the application of human energy to the material provided by nature. Its value (a social relation) depends upon the amount of labour required to reproduce such an article in a given society under certain given physical and social conditions.

All the labour necessary to obtain the raw material, work it up into the product required for consumption, and transport it to the point where such products are necessary for consumption, adds value. Coal produced for the needs of London is of greater value in London than in, say, Newcastle, its source of production. But labour used up in transporting coal from its source in Newcastle to London and then back to Newcastle for consumption would add no value to the coal.

Articles so produced are bought and sold upon the market. The market is the sphere of the circulation of commodities. In this circulating process no value is added to the product. The necessary storing, accounting, advertising and such matters are expenses of circulation but do not increase the value of articles as they come

upon the market with their values already determined.

The fact that some articles sell above and others below their values, and that here and there one capitalist may gain an advantage over another are matters we cannot enter into here, but they do not affect the general position that the value of an article depends upon its cost of reproduction in human energy.

Expenses of circulation such as those mentioned above are generally included under the heading, "Overhead Expenses" by capitalist concerns. Such expenses are paid out of the surplus value obtained in production.

The above brief explanation will clear the way for the answers to our questioner.

The value of an article is already determined when it comes upon the market for sale. The subsequent expenses of circulation are not productive expenses, and hence not value producing.

If by "distribution" is meant the transport of an article from its source of production to the place where consumption requires it, then value is added in such distribution. But if by "distribution" is meant the transport of articles to a spot where it is more profitable to dispose of them, then no value is added in such distribution. In the latter case the question is one of circulation which has already been dealt with.

The answer to the third question is contained in the answer to the first and second.

ED. COM.

### UNITED FRONT?

We have been handed a circular that has been sent out by the British Bureau of the Red International of Labour Unions.

The circular is headed, "Now for the United Front." The "United Front" is the latest "idea" flogged by the sensation mongers in the endeavour to put fresh life into their fading support.

Like all the effusions of the mushroom organisations that live upon phrases instead of upon the recognition of facts and the application of science to problems, the above organisation has its particular set of slogans:

"Work or full maintenance for the unemployed," "The forty-four hour working week," "The six-hour day for miners,"

"The conscription of wealth," "All power to the workers."

Why the forty-four hour week? Why not the 40 or 30? Why the special concern about the miners? What have the printers or painters done that they should be left out? Why should the unemployed bother about work if they can get "Full maintenance" without working? What exactly constitutes the "conscription of wealth," and what "All power to the workers"? Upon these points the circular gives no information. The circular states:

"We must reply to the coming attacks by taking the offensive. We must concentrate all the available strength of our movement in order to win."

How is the "available strength" to be "concentrated" apart from the "slogans"? By the formation of "Councils of Action" through the medium of a conference composed of delegates from "trades councils, trade union branches and district committees, working class local and national political organisations, unemployed organisations, co-operative societies, and guilds"!

What the nature of the action is that this conglomeration of antagonistic bodies is to take we are not informed beyond the fact that it is to "ensure the carrying into effect of the workers' demand."

As the "workers' demands" at the present moment are varied and many opposed to each other, the "United Front" movement promises to make the usual "progress" of such organisations—that is, backwards, by increasing the number of organisations and thus increasing the confusion already afloat.

The wording of the circular shows that the organisers are afflicted with customary flamboyant and empty Russian phrases.

If more attention was paid to a solid back there would be no need to worry about a "United Front," and no occupation for those who are making profit out of the propagation of such a mongrel idea. This solid back can only be obtained by the study and propagation of Socialist principles. This may not be exciting, it does not require slogans or frothy phrases, but it is the only way to achieve working class emancipation, and hence is worth the effort.

PUNCHINELLO.



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**A LECTURE**

WILL BE GIVEN AT

**Walthamstow Baths, High St.,  
WALTHAMSTOW**

ON

Sunday, March 11th, 1923.

Subject:

**“WHY WE OPPOSE  
OTHER  
POLITICAL PARTIES”**

Doors Open 7.30 p.m.

Commence 8.0 p.m.

*Questions and Discussion Invited.***Commune Celebration**

AT

**STRATFORD TOWN HALL,  
STRATFORD BROADWAY,**

ON

Sunday, March 18th, 1923.

Doors open 7.0 p.m.

Commence 7.30 p.m.

Published by THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, 17, Mount Pleasant, London, W.C. 1.; and  
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**THE SOCIALIST PARTY  
OF GREAT BRITAIN.**

**OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.**

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great  
Britain**

**HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.



# THE Socialist Standard

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[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.]

## JUSTICE.

Mr. Ramsay McDonald recently gave it out that the Party of which he is Leader "Fights for Divine Justice." The question of divinity need not detain us, but one of the things which clearly mark off the Socialists from the Labour Party is, that we do not fight for justice; we fight for Socialism. Lest it be thought that the one is as vague and unsatisfactory as the other, let me add that we also define our aim:

"The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community."

We deal with facts, they live in a world of abstractions. We see a system of society, in which a small minority, the capitalist class, own the means of producing wealth. We see that this class no longer takes an active part in the production of the wealth which they own, and of which they retain a large part after paying wages to the workers, the real producers. We see that the capitalist class have ceased to be socially useful, and that the organisation of society which they built up, and which was in its time and place necessary and an advance on previous systems, has become a hindrance to further progress. We see that the capitalists maintain their position by their control of the machinery of Government, and we know they will not willingly abdicate their privileged position. Because of this we ask the worker to organise for the conquest of power so that they may wrest from the ruling class their hold on the means of life, and may rebuild society on the basis of common ownership and democratic control.

We fight for something definite and material; the Labour Party fights for "Justice." What is Justice?

Imagine an unknown speaker, betrayed by no Party label, addressing a mixed crowd at any street corner, and saying: "I fight for justice." If he is anything of an orator he is sure to strike an answering note in the minds of his audience, and they will all agree, with more or less enthusiasm, but complete harmony, that they also fight for justice. But let the speaker begin to explain what he means by justice, and he will soon discover that his conception is his own, and that his audience, in complete discord with each other, will agree only on one thing, that the speaker is a liar, a rogue, or a fool.

"Justice" for the big capitalist means State support in breaking strikes and in keeping control of foreign markets and areas of raw material: he fights for "justice," or more usually he pays workers to do it for him. "Justice" for the Judge means the body of laws which the ruling class want enforced at a particular time in his particular country. "Justice" for the small capitalist means protection against his monopolist rivals, State legislation against trusts, and 1s. off the income tax: he also fights for "justice." "Justice" for the Russian peasant is the right to possess as much land as he can till and to live free from taxation and State interference. "Justice" for the trade unionist means the right to organise. There are as many conceptions of justice as there are sectional interests (real or imagined). All these sections fight for "justice," and also of necessity, they fight each other.



Socialism is born of the class struggle that goes on unceasingly owing to the private property basis of society. Socialism will arise out of the material conditions that exist in the capitalist organisation in which we live. We fight for the possession of the world's wealth. Our aims are clear and we have no need to hide them under the figments of men's minds, whether these be God's or idealistic conceptions of justice and equity. The Labour Party, on the other hand, is the product of the "spirit of progress," which "never dies," says Mr. MacDonald ("Daily Herald," 12th February, 1923). They have come "flaming with spirit," and have won their way "into the hearts and intelligence of the great mass of the people." Apart from a slight exaggeration, the "great mass" having been shown at the election to be about a quarter of the electors, this is all nonsense.

The origin of political movements is not to be explained by vague references to the "spirit of progress," and, of course, parties, even if they are as woolly in their notions as the Labour Party, do in fact fight for concrete ends.

It may be true that many who have taken part in great historical movements have not understood their real meaning; and have been content to give up their lives for a phrase or a creed. Possibly the great majority who have borne the brunt of the fighting in past revolutions have been in this position, but it is nevertheless true that those old battle cries of the revolutionaries have not been mere myths; they have but idealised a more material conflict. "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" sounds fine, and Napoleon's army fired by an idea and later by loyalty to the man who embodied it was an incomparable army, but as Marx says: "Infantry, cavalry and artillery" was much more to the point than brotherhood in furthering the interests of the rising capitalist class of France. For the bourgeois owners of the new machinery of production, liberty from the exactions of the now useless and effete feudal aristocracy; equality before the code of new capitalist laws, and fraternity in the exploitation of the proletariat: these were the gods of the philosophers, the soldiers and the statesmen of the revolution. The Guillotine taught the Paris workers that Liberty, Equality and Fraternity were not

for them. The workers may have been misled, but Napoleon and his advisers were under no illusion. The French capitalists fought through Napoleon for the political and economic dominance of Europe. They and their British rivals saw that the race for industrial supremacy lay between them. Napoleon encouraged the development of machine production in the French wool and cotton industries to outstrip England; he fought for access to the raw material for these industries, and Britain fought to prevent him; he fought for the capture of the European markets, and Britain fought in naval engagements, and by the smuggling trade to retain those markets. Needless to say, both Britain and France fought for "justice," the British variety being "divine" and the French belonging to the new school of "Reason."

At that time the landed aristocracy still kept a firm hand on the government of this country, and the commercial and manufacturing classes had to play second fiddle socially and politically to the fox-hunting squirearchy.

But as the textile, iron and coal trades grew in importance with the coming of machinery and the rapidly increasing foreign trade, the position of the traditional rulers was challenged. The manufacturers wanted free trade and no government interference, and by a choice use of catch-phrases and the promise of the franchise the new prophets, typified by Cobden and Bright, won the workers to their side.

The class which had arisen with the new factory production were successful, and came into power as the Liberal Party. They fought out their political battle, now all but brought to a close, with the granting of partial women's suffrage, but by habit the advanced sections of the working class have continued to stand by the side of the Liberal Party, when this has long since ceased to be any more progressive than its former opponents. Now, there is no real line of cleavage between industrial capitalists and landowners, and the interests of both is summed up in the endeavour to maintain things as they are.

But, says Mr. MacDonald, "Parties have died, but the spirit of progress never dies . . . The Labour Movement stands to-day as the inheritance of the Liberal tradition." In other words, while

the Socialist Party fights for Socialism, that is, for the interests of the working class, Mr. MacDonald and his Party fight for "justice," "Liberal justice." What do we find the Labour Party standing for, as shown in its programme and in its actions? For free trade—that is, for access to cheap raw materials—because in the past the interests of the dominant section of the British capitalist class were best served by free trade. On the other hand, most Continental and Colonial Labour Parties, who also fight for "Justice," are protectionist because their capitalist governments have always been protectionist.

They fight for the "League of Nations" because some sections of the international capitalists wish to avoid the expense of war and the danger it threatens to the stability of their governments. We know that class and international conflicts are part of the nature of capitalism, and can be removed only with the destruction of the present system.

They want a capital levy (that is, a levy on capitalists individually, to lessen their collective State indebtedness) in order to stabilise the currency. They want international loans to improve the disturbed foreign exchanges, revision of the Peace Treaty, and some remission of reparations, all in order to revive capitalist trade.

We want to abolish Capitalism.

They want Nationalisation: that is, private ownership by the capitalists collectively through the State, instead of individually. We want common ownership.

They want industrial peace; they propose to deal "fairly" and "impartially" as between robbers and robbed; to limit the proceeds of the robbery to a "just" rate of profit, and give the robbed a "just" proportion of the wealth they alone have produced. We stand for the destruction of wage slavery and the profit-making system.

In short, they stand for the abstraction "Justice," which interpreted means the stabilisation, by reform, of the capitalist system, in the interests of the capitalist class. We, on the other hand, propose to deprive the capitalists of their private ownership of the means of life. Their right to own has been quite legally acquired, and our aim is therefore necessarily from their point of view a most unjust proceeding. We are, however, not governed by that con-

sideration, and are prepared to stand for the concrete objective Socialism, because in that alone lies the hope of the working class.

H.

## WHO ARE THE SOCIALISTS?

By their deeds ye shall know them.

"A Socialist is one who has yearnings for an equal division of unequal earnings." Thus! our old-fashioned type of antagonist. Finding such puerile nonsense no longer serviceable, more cunning and artful methods are employed to-day. Every sentimental reformer and noisy aspirant to working class "leadership" is hailed by our opponents as a "Socialist." When we question the justification for the use of the word in relation to these individuals, members of the working class who accept such definitions without thought or reason, offer the inane reply in simple sincerity: "Well, he calls himself a Socialist." It is not without reason that the capitalist class in an underhand way assist in the deception that these individuals propagate Socialism. It is comforting to them that the workers accept teachings that imply their trust and faith in such people, because the unquestioning acceptance of these teachings signifies that the workers have not reached that stage of mental alertness which would enable them to analyse and draw their own conclusions. Such understanding would render the efforts of both the well-meaning reformer and the self-seeking "leader" futile. One has but to recall the war to remind the reader how these so-called "Socialists" proved conclusively, by their out and out support of Capitalism, the fraudulent nature of their claim to such a title. Unfortunately, working class memory is a fleeting thing, and permits these agents of Capitalism to continue their campaign of confusion. In a good many cases it is from these people that men and women sincerely seeking to understand the why and wherefore of their lives imbibe their unsound economics and confused conceptions. A visit to a few of their meetings supplies the evidence, and where discussion is permitted it is reduced to a mere farce. Not without reason: Does it matter if these false doctrines are the outcome of sincerity or deliberate design? the effect is equally pernicious to the worker, and of service to the



masters: What then is the difference between the Socialist Party and other political organisations seeking the support of the workers? It is the difference between Reform and Revolution: We have but one object, the establishment of Socialism, to achieve which we work for the revolutionary political organisation of our class. Reforms are necessary to a rapidly developing Society, but granted the carrying through of the whole of the programmes of the Reform parties, the fundamental condition of the workers would not be improved. Generations of reforms have been accompanied with a relative worsening of their conditions. Likewise, to make ridiculous and extravagant "demands" on behalf of the workers while they remain without understanding, merely shows the ignorance or treachery of their would-be "leaders." Without power to enforce these demands they may save their breath, for when the workers have the power they need no longer formulate demands or claim "rights," much less beg their oppressors to hear their woeful tale of want. Powerless in ignorance to-day, they will become mighty and formidable in intelligence to-morrow. While the majority are in the former condition they retain the belief inculcated by their rulers' so-called education, that Capitalism is the best and only system possible—hence, at election times they vote for that system and in war time fight for it. There can only be one correct conception of Socialism, the scientific one. Likewise, those accepting by understanding, the principles arising from this conception are the Socialists, and all others consciously or otherwise enemies of that cause. What then is this scientific conception? It is briefly summarised in our principles. The present system of Society is the result of the development of a previous system, a development in which was generated the conditions for the new Society. Are similar conditions present within the system of to-day? All the means for prolific wealth production are present to-day, but privately owned by the capitalist class, and socially operated by the working class alone; yet capable of being socially owned and democratically controlled for an output of wealth in whatever quantities required to satisfy the needs of the whole people. There is one obstacle; lack of understanding by a majority of the workers of

Socialism, the knowledge we seek to impart. To talk of reforms, united fronts, demands and rights, is to knowingly or unknowingly play the masters' game and divert the toilers from correct knowledge. Disillusioned of their frothy "leaders," and with only contempt for the snivelling reformer, they will march on without need for "trust" or "belief" in anyone, but knowing through understanding that the power of their organised policy will realise their long-delayed emancipation through the establishment of the Socialist Commonwealth.

MAC.

### HYPOCRITICAL CLYNES.

Mr. J. R. Clynes, as the result of his long association with the "Working-class" Movement, has thoroughly learned to trade upon the traditional short memories of the workers, and so can with safety to his position indulge in vagaries according to the situation at any given time. As witness to this, we would draw our readers' attention to some of the remarks to which he gave utterance in his presidential address to the National Federation of General Workers' Conference at Leamington recently. Speaking as a trade-union leader he declared that:—

"The outlook for mutual agreement is not bright, and the sacrifices which the workers have had to endure have not hastened the trade revival which cheaper labour was said to guarantee." (*Daily News*, 18/8/22.)

Further:—

"The service and sacrifice of the millions of workers during the war, who served their country in the Army and Navy, have been scantily rewarded in the days of so-called peace." (*ibid.*)

With regard to the important admission that "the outlook for mutual agreement is not bright," and others to the effect that a matter of six million workers have lost wages to the extent of £10,000,000 per week, and that where resistance was offered the end was often defeat, one would imagine that Mr. Clynes would seek alternative methods to retard this downward tendency. There is no sign of any suggestion, however, but only a vague threat of retaliation in the future, when the conditions of the labour market may permit. It is just here where he reveals his inconsistency, for it is but a short time back, viz., 1919,

when he was loudest amongst those crying for increased production by the workers—for who cannot remember his signature appearing on the well-known Government Poster of that time? It is obvious that increased production, with a decreased consumption, could not possibly redound to the advantage of the workers.

Dealing with the second quotation above, the rewards to those who served in the war are only what were to be expected, if only from our experience of previous campaigns; yet we know that Mr. Clynes ably played his part in helping to prosecute the war—at a safe distance from the mud and blood of Flanders.

These are but jottings, merely intended to show in some slight way the nature of the man whose influence over men is considerable. That these remarks may lead to some diminution of that influence, with a corresponding increase in self-reliance on the part of the workers, is the hope of WILEB.

### ANY MORE FOR THE SIEVE?

You will remember the immortal lines of Edward Lear:

"They went to sea in a sieve they did;  
In a sieve they went to sea."

And then, after extravagant and variegated adventures, in the last verse he informed us:

"In forty years they all came back,  
In forty years or more."

I mention this to introduce you to the great thought that has struck Professor Arthur Thomson. He thinks we should all go into the sieve again; and, unlike kindly Edward Lear, he doesn't want us all to come back.

We welcome the appearance in popular journalism of the man of science. It is good and fitting that those who have been enabled to withdraw from the cut and thrust of commercial life and pursue the search for knowledge exclusively should repay their debt to society in this way. It is to be feared, however, that with the standard of popular journalism fairly low, the scientific contributor is apt to follow suit. But to return to the sieve. The readers of "John o' London's Weekly" for March 17th were informed, under the large heading, "Mankind Must Be Sifted," of the pickle we are in.

"There is too little sifting. If ten biologists were asked what feature in modern civilisation gave them most anxiety . . . we are inclined to think all would agree in placing first the relative slackness of selective processes working in the direction of progressive evolution."

Professor Thomson apparently does not agree with Viscount Grey, who in a recent lecture said that the great question which transcended all others in importance at the present time was the relationship between Capital and Labour. But that is merely by the way. Each to his taste, as it were. He summarises in an able and popular way the successive conquests of poor, puny man over rugged, titanic, barbaric Nature.

"These were ages of stern sifting; they lasted long, and they had good results. Man was sifted to good purpose."

But Professor Thomson almost deplors the fact that in the contest, microbe versus man, it is the microbe which is increasingly taking the count. There are some diseases, he tells us, that weed out the weaker and leave the stronger surviving.

"But this is a rapidly dwindling process, for the progress of hygiene and preventive medicine tends to eliminate the eliminators; and if we devise methods for saving useful lives, . . . we have to use them for saving weakly lives as well."

How sad! How Professor Thomson must have cursed his article of the previous week, wherein he praised the work of Jenner and his conquest of smallpox. That's the worst of this journalism business; your stuff's in print before you have time to think. However, at the time of going to press, pending the publication of a further article on a new dilemma of civilisation, there seems to be a case for the scrapping of our sewage system and the return of the cesspool. Let Nature do the sifting. The weakest to the wall, that's Nature's way. There are sections of mankind who, so other professors have told us, do give Nature a chance with the sieve. Babies not up to market size are exposed to the vultures, or thrown to the crocodiles. Elderly people who feel the strain of living getting too much for them have their brains beaten out with clubs by their sons. The natives of India treat as sacred the poisonous reptiles which wipe out a few thousand of them every year. They decline to resist the claim of the bubonic plague germ to a place in the sun.

I fear I am doing Professor Thomson an injustice. He sees the other horn of the



dilemma. Space precludes quoting in full, but he says:

"Now, the throwing off of the yoke of Natural Selection without substituting for it any processes of sifting that can pretend to be adequately testing or consistent or well thought out means for man a difficult dilemma and a great danger . . . the growing solidarity or integration of society makes it easier for the inferior, or defective, or undesirable slacker, to continue to live and multiply."

Now to his remedies, his sieves:

"(1) The multiplication of the radically undesirable must be checked. (2) . . . re-education of public opinion in the lines of the old-fashioned eugenic ideals of pride of race and pride in having a vigorous family. (3) . . . selection which takes the form of insisting on efficiency requirements. The more of this the better when the requirements are reasonable, and when they tend to make life more difficult for unreliable types whose multiplication is not in the interests of the race. (4) . . . To put an end—so gradually that the process is not cruel—to the less desirable occupations. (5) Perhaps the sifting may come sooner than we think, and in an undesirable form."

He does not mean warfare, for, as he says, war thins rather than sifts, and works in the wrong direction by removing the bravest and best. He concludes rather nebulously by saying:

"Perhaps it is safer to say that man must more resolutely seek to discover rational and social modes of selection to take the place of Natural Selection, whose rule is almost over. What is needed is a progressive evolution of sieves."

Nebulous certainly seems the aptest adjective. Notice how the changes are rung on desirable and undesirable. By whom and for whom? Why is the question never once raised as to who and what are the defectives; whence they come or how they arise. I have seen it stated by another of the professorial fraternity that in spite of all hereditary taint 99 per cent. are born perfect. When one thinks of the lives led by millions of workers, this figure is surprisingly low. What happens after birth the war recruiting strikingly revealed, for to get an army of any size, the deaf, the half-blind, the half-witted, and the epileptic were roped in by the hundred. Reflect upon the thousands of dentists, tearing out the teeth of the nation; upon the thousands of oculists attending to our eyes; the battalions of doctors waxing fat on our unhealthiness; our huge and overcrowded hospitals, asylums, yes, and prisons; and then ask, is it sieves we want? Many "enlightened" employers have found that garden cities, well ventilated factories, fatigue reducing methods, staff athletic

clubs, canteens, etc., result in higher efficiency, reduced sickness and greater contentment. They have found that the manufacture of defectives does not pay in their particular business. In scores of other businesses it does not matter. Any lapse through the non-operation of these factors is speedily remedied through the Labour Exchange. The employing class as a whole never says, "Low wages mean stunted men, starved women and defective children." It never says, "Long hours and intense toil mean premature age, empty lives and high accident rates for the toilers." But they do mean so. For every defective born there is a hundred made by capitalism. For the defective born there is a hope of cure; for the defective made there is none—except Socialism. Professor Thomson would chuck him in the sieve. The Socialist would render the sieve unnecessary by ceasing the manufacture of defectives. The scientific professor is concerned with effects, the Socialist with causes. Judge you between us.

W. T. H.

### MIXED VIEWS.

The advent into Parliament of a larger number of Labour members than hitherto is causing the working class adherents of the Labour Party to feel highly elated.

To keep the pot at boiling point the "Daily Herald" is daily publishing portraits and histories of these "white hopes." The mixture of aims and aspirations and the national programme are somewhat at variance, but this fact apparently escapes the notice of the adherents.

Some are Trade Union officials, pinning their faith on "industrial action"; others believe in government of the ignorant many by the intellectual few; while quite a lot are Christians!

To the latter "recommendation" the "D.H." expresses deep satisfaction. The only reasonable conclusion is that the greater the addition to their ranks the more complicated will the problems confronting the working class become, the more confused will be their minds, and the more satisfied and appreciative will be the ruling class.

To quote but one example of the democratic instincts of the "oil and water mixers."

On the fifteenth of February last five officials of Civil Service unions, two of them Labour M.P.'s, dined at the Connaught Rooms with the Duke of York, several foreign ambassadors, some admirals, baronets, knights, the Prime Minister, and other well-wishers of the working class.

They represented the Civil Service. How "civil" that service must be to agree to its hired parliamentary champions acting in such a way is not a mental problem.

No doubt they will receive the usual vociferous applause whenever they find it convenient to address a gathering of their "Unions." Possibly things of this description happen more frequently than is generally known.

Without doubt the Parliamentary Labour Party is an integral part of the capitalist machine, a part in which it promises to become very efficient; by using identical methods and making innumerable "promises" great adaptability is shown.

The principal question confronting them at the moment is "unemployment," and all sorts of schemes are being considered, none of which, however, touch even the fringe of the question.

The unemployed just now are being regaled with a species of "soft soap" called "trade revival," and moreover it is being issued by the Labour Party.

There is a refusal to come to grips with facts, and the chief fact is that "unemployment is a necessity to capitalism." With the development of the system there is a steadily increasing industrial reserve, which makes the competition for jobs keener and cheapens labour power. If the problem was capable of solution under the existing system labour leaders and T.U. officials would have to change their jobs! One factor is the introduction of more and more labour-saving machinery, calling for less human energy, which in general means increase in unemployment.

The logical conclusion is that as unemployment is necessary to the social order, and that social order is desired by the working class, the attendant but necessary evils of the order are also desired. And the evils are many, though one individual may not come in contact with them all. Poverty in the midst of plenty, vile slums and sumptuous palaces, wooden clogs and clainty shoes, shoddy clothes and warm wool—these, the extremes of but a few

of those evils which you, fellow worker, appear to desire.

You *do* desire them, you vote for them at every election; possibly you will continue to vote for them unless you start seriously to examine.

To do this, have done with all bodies that are only diverting your energies and intelligence to enable them to grind their own particular axes. Forget Tutankhamen's tomb, the royal baby, and all such things. Concentrate your mind on the future of your own children; their very existence is in jeopardy, and it's your indifference they will blame.

Perfect the organisation of your class, the Socialist Party, whose object is the ending for all time of systems of society that allow the minority to possess the world's wealth.

It is a job for the understanding majority. You are of the majority. Get politically intelligent. Your master is; so, if you wish, can you be.

GRIFF.

## A Lecture on Why we are opposed to all other Political Organisations

WILL BE DELIVERED AT THE

TOWN HALL, EDMONTON,

ON

Sunday, 15th April, 1923.

Doors Open 7 p.m.

Chair taken 7.35 p.m.

Admission Free.

Questions and Discussion.

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

Owing to an oversight on the part of the Editorial Committee last month "S.S." contained no mention of our Annual Conference. In case this number of the paper is in the hands of readers in time we may state that the Annual Conference will be in session on Good Friday and Saturday at Fairfax Hall, Portland Gardens, Harringay. It is open to the public.

On Good Friday evening the Annual Reunion and Social between members and sympathisers commences at 7.30 p.m.



**OFFICIAL NOTICE.**

All communications for the Executive Committee, Subscriptions for the SOCIALIST STANDARD, Articles, and Correspondence submitted for insertion therein, should be addressed—The Socialist Party of Great Britain, 17, Mount Pleasant, London, W.C.1, to whom Money Orders should be made payable.

The meetings of the Executive Committee are held at the Head Office, every Tuesday, at 7.30 p.m.

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**The Socialist Standard,**

APRIL



1923

**LABOUR'S "REVOLUTIONARY" LEADERS.**

When the Labour Party was returned to Parliament as the Opposition there was much rejoicing in "Labour" circles, and a "hot" time was promised the Government if the unemployed problem was not satisfactorily tackled in the immediate future. Nearly five months have passed since that auspicious event, and alleviation of unemployment is perhaps farther away than ever. So far the attitude of Labour's "champions" has been limited to words "full of sound and fury signifying nothing."

Now that the Labour members have had a chance to shake down more comfortably into their "important" position as "His Majesty's Opposition party" we are provided with a few definite indications as to how they intend acting. That they will be thoroughly statesmanlike and highly respectable the capitalists apparently have little doubt in view of the character of the men at the helm. An influential newspaper recently expressed itself on this point as follows:

"The Speaker as shepherd has notable reason to be proud of the labour part of his flock. Apart from an uncouth few of the Clyde gang, they have learned parliamentary manners with surprising rapidity. They not only obey the chair; they keep each other in order. By comparison with the wild-cat section there is a solid element of practical moderation amongst the Labour members. We refuse to fear the future. (*Observer*, 11.3.23).

If a capitalist newspaper refuses to fear the future then the inference is that the capture of power by the Labour Party signifies "no change" in the social order. That the "powers that prey" have good reason to be content with the character of the new opposition has been amply borne out by certain recent events.

In the expectation of possibly being called upon soon "to form a government," the leaders of the Labour Party are apparently undergoing strict training to carry out such future august functions in a manner befitting the time-dishonored traditions of this great and glorious country. They have recently dined with royalty (to show there is no ill-feeling!)—eating choice viands and drinking choice wines in blessed harmony with those who are fed, clothed and housed by the sweated slaves of the field and factory.

"Prominent Labour M.P.'s and their wives were among the guests invited to meet the King and Queen at a dinner party given by Viscount and Viscountess Astor at 4, St. James Square, last night."

reports the "Daily News" (9.3.23). Among those who attended were:

Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Clynes, and Mr. and Mrs. Philip Snowden. Incidentally we are informed:

"The King and the other men guests generally wore knee breeches, but the Labour Members appeared in plain evening dress."

Is this the way to tackle the unemployed and kindred problems? While the Labour members are pampered guests of the well-fed oppressing class their luckless constituents are in many cases without dinners worthy of the name. Anyhow, it is reassuring to notice that the champions of the oppressed wore "plain evening dress"—it is a pretty compliment to the ragged-trouser-ed electorate who sent them to Parliament as representatives! Possibly the Labour Members will return from the banquet reinvigorated for the strenuous work of—softening the antagonism between master and slave.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was not invited to the above gathering. His turn came the following Thursday, when he went in lonely majesty to represent the workers in a convivial evening with the enemy, at Buckingham Palace.

Mr. Philip Snowden was so refreshed by the invigorating atmosphere at the dinner

party that we learn, at the moment of writing, he is to move a resolution in the House of Commons on the 20th March in the following terms:

"That in view of the failure of the capitalist system adequately to utilise and organise natural resources and productive power, or to provide the necessary standard of life for vast numbers of the population, and believing that the cause of this failure lies in the private ownership and control of the means of production and distribution, this House declares that legislative effort should be directed to the gradual supersession of the capitalist system by an industrial and social order based on the public ownership and democratic control of the instruments of production and distribution." (*Daily Herald*, 16.3.23).

Achilles was vulnerable in his heel, but this resolution is vulnerable in its tail. Not Common Ownership but Public Ownership is its ultimate aim. And what is "Public Ownership"? Only another phrase for Nationalisation. In other words, the aim of the resolution is to bring about collective ownership of the means of production on behalf of the capitalist class instead of direct ownership by individual groups within that class as to-day. That is, organising the whole of production on a similar system to that of the Post Office and similar State-owned concerns.

It will be further noticed that the resolution does not propose any immediate drastic change. Effort is to be directed to "the gradual supersession." There can be quite easily a gradual change from private to State property; but there cannot be a gradual change from private to common ownership. The latter change is a fundamental change, in which one form excludes the other. In a modern state private and common ownership cannot exist side by side as the Bolsheviks found to their cost. "All or nothing" is the way the question of necessity is put.

Anyone who understands the problem, and is familiar with the Labour Parliamentary Group, could have no illusions as to the improbability of any real attempt to introduce common ownership coming from that quarter. This group is made up in the main of religious visionaries, taxation quacks, place-hunters, wind-bags, and would-be "statesmen"; all these have been returned by a politically backward electorate.

The leader of the Labour Party gave a demonstration of how well he could carry himself from the point of view of statesmanship at Port Talbot, where he said:

"In our policy regarding reparations we ought not to be ashamed to let the world know quite definitely that we must look after our own national interests and not sacrifice them merely to keep up the balance of an alliance with France or any other country." (*Observer*, 7.1.23).

In this statement it will be observed that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald has risen above the "narrow" outlook of the worker and reached the "broad" outlook of—the English capitalist class! The "we" and "our" in the quotation stand for the capitalists, not the workers, as it is the capitalists' interests that are concerned in the matter.

A sidelight on the nature of the backing that brought Ramsay MacDonald and Snowden back within the sacred precincts of "pelf and place" was given by the former when speaking at Newington Public Hall, S.E., when he referred to the way in which the I.L.P. was taking up singing:

"Wherever one went choirs were springing up in connection with the branches of the I.L.P., and they said in Scotland that it was not the genius of the I.L.P. that was responsible for the magnificent Labour victories last November; it was because the Scottish I.L.P. had revived Scottish music, and in that way had got to the hearts and intelligence of the people." (*Daily Herald*, 5.3.23).

Would it be unfair to recall the words of the old proverb, "Empty vessels make the most sound"?

**HOW TO SNARE LABOUR LEADERS.**

The ruling class have recently been very busy winning over Labour Leaders by the old game of patronage of flattery. They have been invited to dine with Peers and Royalty, so that they may learn how the master class love the workers. Needless to say, the Labour Leaders, anxious to get the votes of the reactionary, so-called middle class, have rushed willingly into the trap. The "Daily Herald" avoids a definite expression of opinion by saying (12th March, 1923):

"Our own view is that Labour M.P.'s are the best judges of their own section in social matters. Certainly no one could impute to those in question any weakness of character or any failure to consider what effect their action would be likely to produce."

A few years ago, when the "Herald" was not quite so subservient, it published some verses by W. N. Ewer, which summed up



the position more vigorously and more correctly.

"Whom the King delighteth to Honour."  
 "May we go now, Hodge?"—Lord Derby.  
 "I hope to see Mr. Hodge in the House of Lords."—Lord Burnham.  
 "Of course, I know Mr. John Hodge very well."  
 —George V.  
 When Derby dropped the prefix from your name,  
 And hailed you "Hodge," acclaiming you an equal,  
 We thought you'd reached the topmost heights of fame,  
 That Fate could give you nothing in the sequel  
 Better than this admitted full equality  
 With gentry of the highest rank and quality.  
 We deemed it then as certain you would get  
 The Peerage Burnham now has prophesied you,  
 That, clad in ermine and a coronet,  
 You'd sit, Lord Hodge, with Curzon, say, beside you,  
 Perhaps a bishop as your other neighbour  
 Incarnating the dignity of Labour.  
 But now—you've passed beyond such petty things  
 As baronies and social recognition,  
 You have become the intimate of Kings,  
 You have o'erleaped the loftiest ambition;  
 Dukedoms and Garters wait you—what's the bettin'?  
 You the close friend of royal George of—Windsor.  
 But does it never enter in your head  
 That here in England honours must be paid for  
 Either in coin or services instead?  
 In fact, that is precisely what they're made for.  
 All of them, from the B.E. to the Garter,  
 Are merchandise displayed for sale or barter.  
 It's not for love of your sweet self alone  
 Our lords and masters trouble to amuse you  
 With honours and with flattery from the throne;  
 Dear Hodge, it's only that they want to use you.  
 You take their gift—well, thank them as you may for it,  
 You'll find they still expect that you will pay for it.  
 You cannot pay, as others do, with gold.  
 You must sell something—they'll insist on payment.  
 What—*who* is it that's going to be sold?  
 God! Don't you see beneath the sheep-skin raiment,  
 Don't you see "gifts" from royal Faith Defenders  
 Are just like "easy terms" from money-lenders.  
 Hodge! Surely you're not going to be caught  
 By dangled coronets and royal cooing.  
 Tell them that Labour isn't to be bought;  
 Tell them right out that there is nothing doing.  
 Quick! or you'll find too late that you are netted,  
 Disgraced and damned and chained and coroneted.  
 H.

## SOCIALISM AND THE FASCISTI.

The Socialist Party accepts the view that it is necessary for the workers before they can begin to introduce Socialism to conquer the powers of Government in order

that they may control the Governmental machinery, and through it the armed forces. The fulfilment of our programme requires that a majority of the workers shall understand and want Socialism. Given such a majority and its reflex in a majority of Socialist delegates on local councils and in the House of Commons, the workers will be in a position to impose their will on the present ruling class; an appeal to armed force from whom will be met by the military, acting under the instructions of the Socialist delegates.

This attitude is subjected to many criticisms, one of which is that the capture of the political machinery will not give the power we assert. Those who make this criticism argue that while political power is necessary it can be obtained only by the workers building up a rival organisation and with it overthrowing the capitalist State. They deny that the power of the capitalists rests on their control of Parliament, and point to the Fascist movement in Italy as proof that revolutionary Parliamentary action by the workers is futile. The workers must, they argue, organise armed resistance to the ruling class. They do not explain how the workers are going to obtain possession of the arms and organise in such strength as to offer serious opposition to the Crown forces, and it seems fairly obvious that the capitalists will easily be able to prevent such organisation within the present system. When pressed on this point the exponents of violence look knowing, and make obscure references to the disastrous Irish insurrection now being crushed by the capitalist Free State Government.

Their chief argument is, however, the rise of the Italian Fascisti, who, they say, robbed the workers by armed intimidation of their constitutional gains. If it were shown to be possible that in an advanced and stable capitalist democracy the ruling class were able to throw aside the recognised forms of government, to ignore the institutions which they had proclaimed to be the basis of society, to rule by brute force and to *survive*, a condition of things would be created requiring the application of methods other than those we advocate. As regards Italy, however, it just doesn't happen to be true.

What these critics have overlooked is

that the Fascist movement existed only by permission of the Italian Government, by the permission, that is, of the people who *did* control the political machinery and the armed forces.

Nor is there evidence that the Italian workers as a whole had ever reached the stage of desiring Socialism. They had, for instance, not returned a majority of Socialists to the Italian Parliament, nor had they captured more than a minority of the town and other councils.

What is always advanced as proof of their being revolutionary is their seizure of the factories during 1920. But according to the correspondent in Italy of the New York "Nation" (March 8th, 1922) this will bear no such interpretation. The "Nation" article (quoted by the "Western Clarion," Vancouver, May 1st, 1922) gives the following account of the event. The war gave rise in Italy to a new and powerful group of metal industries with banking connections, known as Peronne Brothers, the allied bank being the Banca Italiana Disconto. It was the Peronne factories, the "Ansaldo Iron and Steel Co.," which were occupied in 1920.

This group and its banking allies came into conflict with the older concerns, and at the end of the war, with its consequent slackening of demand for iron and steel for war purposes, the position of Peronne Bros. became acute. Naturally the employers sought to resist the wage demands of their workers, and for this purpose entered into alliance with their rivals. It was their betrayal by their rivals, the Banca Commerciale, which caused their defeat and subsequent bankruptcy.

"The proletarian seizure of the factories was, in its political and juridical episodes a counter-attack of 'safe and sane' industry upon 'political and new' industry. The Steel operators (Peronnes) were tricked into resisting the demands of the workers on promise of support from all the other manufacturers; who at once pacified their labourers with reasonable concessions, knowing well that the Steel industries would not be able to follow suit."

It is a noteworthy fact that the government of the day did not at once use troops to eject the workers. The "Nation" suggests that this was because Giolitti, the Premier, was in close friendship with the Banca Commerciale and wanted the factories occupied. It certainly is true that the

movement came to nothing. If the responsibility for failure is laid on the shoulders of the men's leaders, this is only another way of saying that the men had no clear idea of their object nor how to attain it: they were, in fact, in a state of unrest, but were not consciously revolutionary, and were therefore not ready to undertake the task of overthrowing capitalism. They decided themselves by ballot vote to evacuate the factories.

As for the Fascisti, a member of the Communist Party of Italy, A. Bordiga, writing in the "Labour Monthly" (Feb. and March, 1923), gives an interesting account of their origin. In brief, he states that the end of the war found the Italian Government faced, like other governments, with the difficult problems of transition to peace. First, there was demobilisation and the absorption of ex-Service men into industry, and then there was the task of disillusioning those who really thought that the workers were going to share in the fruits of victory. To meet the peculiar conditions which arose from having to deal with masses of men who had been under arms for years and had been overwhelmed with flattery and promises, the Government deliberately encouraged the Fascist movement.

That they were able to do so was the result of the unfortunate fact that the Italian Capitalist Government still had the support of the majority of the Italian workers and peasants.

"After the Nitti, Giolitti, and Bonomi Governments, we had the Facta Cabinet. This type of Government was intended to cover up the complete liberty of action of Fascism in its expansion over the whole country. During the strike in August, 1922, several conflicts took place between the workers and the Fascisti, who were openly aided by the Government. One can quote the example of Bari. During a whole week of fighting, the Fascisti in full force were unable to defeat the Bari workers, who had retired to the working class quarters of the city, and defended themselves by armed force. The Fascisti were forced to retreat, leaving several of their number on the field. But what did the Facta Government do? During the night they surrounded the old town with thousands of soldiers and hundreds of carabinieri of the Royal Guard. In the harbour a torpedo boat trained its guns on the workers. Armoured cars and guns were brought up. The workers were taken by surprise during their sleep, the Proletarian leaders were arrested, and the Labour headquarters were occupied. This was the same throughout the country. Wherever Fascism had been beaten back by the workers the power of the State intervened; workers who resisted were shot down;



workers who were guilty of nothing but self-defence were arrested and sentenced; while the magistrates systematically acquired the Fascisti, who were generally known to have committed innumerable crimes. Thus the State was the main factor in the development of Fascism."

Further, while it is correct that the Fascisti were not in a majority in the Italian Parliament, they were compelled because of this to accept into their Cabinet representatives of such other parties as would give a combined majority, and Bordiga considers that it is only a matter of months before Mussolini takes Trade Union officials as well into his government.

The critics who argue from the experience of Italy that an armed minority can ignore parliamentary control are also invited to consider Bordiga's statement that:

"Fascism, after having temporarily adopted republicanism, finally rallied to the strictest monarchist loyalism; and after having loudly and constantly cried out against parliamentary corruption, it has now completely accepted parliamentary procedure." H.

### SOCIALISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

The famous Doctor Samuel Johnson once said, "Two contradictory ideas may inhere in the same mind; they cannot both be correct." And one is reminded of this obvious truth when reading the correspondence recently published in the "Daily Herald" on the subject of "Christianity and Labour." Of the letters published the majority convey the view that there is a similarity between what the various writers call Socialism and Christianity. To the Socialist, however, those who hold this view betray an ignorance of both sets of ideas. For not only are Socialism and Christianity not identical; they are irreconcilably opposed. The antagonism between Socialism and Christianity is fundamental, as will be seen in the different methods employed to explain social conditions, and also in the totally different concepts of life. To find an explanation of present social conditions the Socialist analyses society and discovers therein two distinct social classes, separated from each other by clearly marked political and economic characteristics. One class, the capitalist class, own and control the means of wealth production, but take no part in the process of producing the wealth. The analysis of the Socialist shows that the capitalists, who own an enormous mass of wealth, are able to obtain

this wealth by the robbery of the other class in society—the working class.

Having no property in the means of wealth production the members of the working class are compelled to sell their energy to those who own the various tools of production, in order to obtain the wherewithal to live. It is by means of the workers applying this energy to nature given material that the wealth necessary to human existence is produced. But the great bulk of this wealth is appropriated by the capitalists who have control of political power and consequently use that power to legalise their robbery of the working class.

There is little need to stress the fact that, contrary to the wealthy position of the capitalists, the position of the workers is one of poverty and insecurity of existence. In an earlier stage of social development man endured privation through his lack of knowledge of the forces of nature, but in modern society, with man having gained a greater control over natural forces, wealth can be produced in abundance. Starvation or a lack of the means of subsistence, although unavoidable in earlier times, is now quite avoidable. There are ample means at the disposal of modern society for all to live in economic security, free from the yoke of servitude and the exploitation and poverty it entails for the working class. The poverty and the general degradation within society we trace directly to the class ownership of the means of life.

Thus it is in the roots of society itself that the Socialist discovers the core of the "social problem."

The Christian, however, if he is consistent with his creed, alleges that the explanation of all things, including social conditions, is to be found in that metaphysical abstraction "God"—an abstraction aptly described by Spinoza as the "asylum of ignorance." To the Christian this world is "God's world." He created it, and everything in it, including man. The affairs of the world are supposed to be controlled by this supernatural power, whose activities it is blasphemy to question.

In contrast with the scientific determinism of the Socialist philosophy, which points out the overwhelming influence of material conditions in shaping human conduct, the Christian asserts that man is endowed with a free will, and he expects human conduct to take on any particular form regard-

less of whatever conditions are prevailing. Hence, while the Socialist relies upon a change of political and economic conditions for human improvement, the Christian calls for "a change of heart." In contrast with the policy of the Socialist, who urges the workers to resist the tyranny of their exploiters, and to organise themselves for the overthrow of class domination, the Christian urges the policy of class conciliation. The poverty stricken worker is to shake the hand of his wealthy exploiter, and "Capital and Labour" are to live in harmony. Instead of the end of classes we are to have their continuance under the cloak of "Christian brotherhood."

The method of the Socialist—i.e., the method of explanation through natural causes is therefore in striking contrast with the method of the Christian, who seeks the explanation through the mistiness of supernaturalism. It is claimed by many who attach little or no importance to the supernaturalism of Christianity that the ethics now associated with that religion are of the essence of Socialism, but only ignorance or deliberate misrepresentation can give rise to the claim.

Throughout the history of societies composed of classes the various ethical codes have been those best suited to the interest of the particular ruling class, and imposed upon the lower orders as a means of government. The ethics of Christianity form no exception to this rule; they are slavish ethics, and as such have been an assistance to government in the hands of rulers throughout Christendom.

It is fairly obvious that for any religion or ethical code to be adopted by the ruling class it must conform to its interest, and the fact that Christianity, with its slavish ethical code, has been a State religion for centuries, is in itself sufficient to merit the serious attention of the student of sociology. Christianity first became a State religion in the slave conditions of the decaying Roman Empire, in an age that is described by Professor Seeley as a religious age, "because it was an age of servitude." Many historians concur in the view that it was the cardinal ethic of submission which influenced Constantine, the Roman Emperor, to embrace Christianity.

After its recognition by the head of the Roman Empire, the progress of Christianity proceeded apace throughout West-

ern Europe, and its progress can be explained largely by its utility as an aid to government.

The student of history will find that Christianity, like all other religions, has been utilised against the lower orders whenever they have rebelled against the tyranny of their rulers. The scriptural injunction of "Servants obey your masters," has always been ready to hand to encourage submissiveness, and the "great" Martin Luther, who is held up by the Protestants as a light of liberty, demonstrated how this injunction serves against the subject class. When the peasants of Germany rose in revolt against their exploiters in 1525, Luther addressed the nobles and princes as follows:

"Inasmuch as they are evil minded and brazenly refuse to obey, and furthermore, resist their masters, they have forfeited life and soul as do all faithless, perjured, mendacious, disobedient knaves and villains. Therefore it becomes the duty of all here to strangle and stab, secretly or publicly, all such, and remember that there is nothing so poisonous, injurious and fiendish as a rebellious person. Just as you would kill a mad dog; if you do not strike him he will strike you, and with you the whole country." (Quoted by Gustav Bang in his "Crises in European History.")

It is useless for our Christian apologists to claim that Luther and his like acted in contravention of "true Christianity." For in every case of the votaries of Christianity using their influence to crush rebellion they stood upon the "authority of the Holy Bible." The doctrine of non-resistance to evil is one of the chief tenets of the Christian religion, and was taught by its titular founder and his chief apostle Paul. The latter, in his various epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, etc., at all times enjoined the slaves to be obedient to their masters "in fear and trembling," and to give them the same submission as they gave to Christ. Thus it is clear that the ethics of Christianity with their slavish characteristics are utterly out of harmony with the revolutionary principles of Socialism. Even the much lauded "Golden rule," although no monopoly of Christianity, since it was preached centuries prior to the advent of that religion, and is to be found in most ancient religions and philosophies, is useless to the workers as a means of their social advancement. Those who dominate society cannot be removed from their social position by the preaching of ethics; they can only be removed as all other ruling classes have been removed, i.e., by the reins



of government being taken from their control by another class gaining power.

With regard to the different concepts of life between the Socialist and the Christian. The latter can only regard the world as a "vale of tears," and this life as a painful preparation for a life we are supposed to live hereafter. It is an essential part of Christian teaching that the affairs of this life are as nought compared with the promised life beyond the clouds, and consequently we are enjoined to despise earthly things, to reap our reward in heaven. Of course, the Christian in practice treats earthly things much in the same manner as do non-Christians, but we are concerned here not with his actions but with his teaching. To the Socialist, the affairs of this life, the only life we know of, are of the utmost importance, and our concern is to make it as pleasurable as possible. As indicated above, there are ample means at the disposal of mankind to-day for all to live in economic security and in healthy social surroundings. But such a condition of affairs will not be accomplished by preaching ethics, whether religious or secular, it will only materialise by the waging of the class struggle in which the workers must be backed up by a sound knowledge of the forces that lead to their emancipation from wage slavery. The workers must realise the fact that, in the words of Marx, "Religion is the opium of the people"; it has been the chloroform in the hands of parasites, throughout the history of class domination, and inasmuch as it has any influence in modern society, it acts as it is its nature to act, as a conservative force, aiming to preserve the traditional illusions of the dead past, as obstacles to the needs of the living present, and the future. Christianity, like all religions, has been driven from every field of science, and since Socialism in philosophy is science applied to society, Christianity can find no logical place in the Socialist philosophy. We Socialists take our stand upon the firm basis of positive science explaining social conditions, and, in fact, all things within the scope of our knowledge, by purely natural causation. Thus, the materialistic movement of Socialism is seen to be utterly opposed to the false idealism and supernaturalism of Christianity. Socialism alone, with its recognition of the supreme importance of material things, can accom-

plish for the workers what Christianity and its slavish morality assists to retard. We know that economic evolution and the self-interest of the working class are inevitably preparing the path for that great social change, when the workers of the world will enjoy the fruits of their labour in a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means of wealth production and distribution by and in the interest of the whole community; a system of society known as Socialism.

R. REYNOLDS.

### PARADISE AND POVERTY.

Dean Inge has, apparently, neither the knowledge nor the consequent optimism of outlook in social matters that characterise the convinced Socialist. "The Gloomy Dean" is a pessimist. In a series of extracts from "Outspoken Essays: Second Series," quoted in "John o' London's Weekly" (4/11/22), appears the following:

"Behind the problem of our future rises the great question whether any nation which aims at being a working-man's paradise can long flourish. Civilisation hitherto has always been based on great inequality."

By "our" future, no doubt the Dean means that of the privileged class of the country—the class he is a spokesman for and whose continued dominance he is not anxious to see threatened. He is a paid servant of theirs, and has to express things palatable to them.

It is very doubtful if he understands the working-class position. Anyhow, it seems as though he feared that our kind rulers are aiming to provide a "working-class paradise," and doubts its ability to flourish long.

Well, so far, there have not appeared any signs of such magnanimous purposes. There never has been a "working-man's paradise," under the present system, at any time or in any country.

Capitalism implies a division of society into classes, with warring interests. It entails "a great inequality," economically and socially. It is based on the exploitation of the property-less masses by those who own the means of wealth production. Thus the subjugation and the slavery of vast multitudes to a small minority who own and control the means of life, is an accomplished fact of the present. It will continue so for as

long as the working-class are content to endure it. For the fact remains that the masses have the *potential* power to-day: they have the preponderance of voting power and can use that power—had they the knowledge and desire—to capture, constitutionally, the machinery of government.

They can think, and they can vote. Armed with Socialist principles, and a knowledge and hatred of the present system, their class-conscious action could, and would, prove irresistible.

Now, Dean Inge, pessimist, evidently thinks that because "Civilisation has, hitherto, always been based on a great inequality," there must *always* be a great inequality in society. He thinks its existence constitutes an insuperable barrier to what he is pleased to call "a working-man's paradise."

In the "great inequality" of the class-divided society of to-day and its appalling results to the working class, lies the complete damnation of capitalism!

Socialists are out to abolish this system and substitute in its place "*The Socialist Commonwealth*." The day is with the privileged, the idlers, and the plunderers of the workers. At present "civilisation" provides a *paradise for the parasitic*. Under a capitalist régime wealth is provided for the private profit of the owners of the means of life. It enables them and their retinue to live in idleness and luxury. Their wealth, enjoyment, and ease is the corollary of the poverty, misery, and toil of the drudging masses. Their refinements and ostentatious display, their advantages and privileges, accrue to them as the result of the robbery of the working class.

The basic principle of the wages system is the buying and using of men's labour-power to provide a *surplus value* for the capitalist to appropriate. In other words, the wage-worker is simply used to provide a far greater value than the value represented by the "wages" paid him.

Those "wages" are, on the average, barely sufficient to maintain him in a state of efficiency for continued wealth-production and reproduce his species as future "wage-slaves." For the future of capitalism depends on a plenteous reserve of workers to exploit.

All the commodities produced belong to the capitalists, the surplus value produced

in the factory is realised for the owners by its sale in the markets.

With the means of wealth production being so great, and the organisation of industry so complete, wealth is nowadays produced with ease. Fresh devices for extracting the utmost surplus value are constantly introduced. The exploiters thus grow increasingly rich. The exploited masses thus, relatively, are impoverished. Poverty and precariousness of livelihood go hand-in-hand. Unemployment is more frequently recurring, and want and misery of the workers is a chronic symptom of the system.

Thus the working class—did they but realise it—have no interest in the continuance of capitalism. Their only hope is in its abolition. Socialism is the only system by which those who produce the world's wealth would own and control the means of wealth production and enjoy the whole fruits of their labours.

The sole object of our rulers is to maintain and consolidate *their* privileges. They oppose anything that threatens to menace or curtail them. Thus it is preposterous to imagine that any effort would be made to make a "working-man's paradise": for only the continued enslavement and the continued exploitation of the masses ensures capitalist supremacy. To keep the proletariat diligent, docile, and contented, whilst systematically robbing them through the wages system, is the masters' great purpose. To them, "the great inequality" is necessary: for through it they get the lion's share of the social wealth.

Fellow-workers! think these things over: of all questions this is paramount! Study Socialism and get to fully understand our principles. Organise, class-consciously, for the capture of governmental powers—and use them for the overthrow of the system that robs and impoverishes *your* class.

Organise for the ushering in of "*The Socialist Commonwealth*." You have, in realising "the World for the Workers," everything to win!

J. G. M.

Readers who find it difficult or impossible to obtain the SOCIALIST STANDARD through the usual channels should communicate with the Head Office, 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.I., when regular delivery will be arranged.



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Clapham Common, 3 p.m.  
 Finsbury Park, 3 p.m.  
 Manor Park, Earl of Essex, 7.30 p.m.  
 Tooting Broadway, Garratt-lane, 11.30 a.m.  
 Tottenham, West Green Corner, 7.30 p.m.  
 Victoria Park, 11.30 a.m.  
 Walthamstow, Hoe Street Station, 7.30 p.m.

**Mondays:**

Highbury Corner, 8 p.m.

**Tuesdays:**

Tooting, Church-lane, 8 p.m.

**Thursdays:**

Dalston, Queen's-road, 8.30 p.m.

**Saturdays:**

Wood Green, Jolly Butcher's-hill, 8 p.m.  
 Tottenham, Bruce Grove Station, 8 p.m.

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY  
OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.



# THE Socialist Standard

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[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.]

## ABANDON THE IDOLS.

The need for knowledge, lest we be duped, is constantly forced upon us. The clergyman tells us the ins and outs of the twilight land—and takes our humble offerings. The doctor doses us for complaints from which we do not suffer—and takes our humble pence. The lawyer assures us that our case is worth fighting, drains us of what little money we have, then finds our case too weak to contest. The average politician asks for our trust, and promises to cure our social ills; experience afterwards informs us that we have been “sold again.”

Where knowledge is possessed in these different directions, how altered is the position! Knowledge of the laws of nature frees us from the clergyman's assistance; knowledge of the laws of life frees us from unnecessary medical attention; knowledge of the laws of “Justice” enables us to instruct the lawyer; and knowledge of the laws of society enables us to appreciate the limits of the politician's power.

There are limits to the quantity of knowledge each individual can acquire, but one department is open to all to acquire sufficient to free them from dependence upon self-appointed guides. As far as the worker is concerned, that department is connected with his position in society and the method whereby it can be improved.

It has become a habit for the worker, in his struggle for better conditions, to depend upon the instructions of individuals supposedly possessing to an unusual degree the intelligence necessary for conducting the struggle in the best way. This dependence generally consists of a blind trust in a “leader,” and a faithful carrying out of his instructions wheresoever they may lead.

The disasters that constantly accompany this idol worship eventually bring about the fall of one popular idol, only to leave room for another. The position is further complicated by a war among the idols for the favours attached to leadership.

A case in point, with regard to idol worship, is that of J. H. Thomas, whose popularity at present among railwaymen is probably greater than ever, in spite of the disasters that have accompanied the policies he put forward and his openly boasted friendship with the railwaymen's opponents.

As long as the first place in the minds of the workers is occupied by this blind and unreasoning trust in another to accomplish that which one can accomplish readily and satisfactorily oneself, the condition of the majority of the people will continue one of slavery and misery.

Ideas that have been fixed in the mind by habit are difficult to remove. When such ideas serve the interests of a ruling class, their removal becomes still more difficult. The idea of “Leadership” is of the latter kind. Born of the delegation of function in early societies, it has grown into the slavish habit of placing in the hands of a popular idol the power to settle the affairs of large groups almost as he wishes. Times innumerable, these popular leaders have used this influence to put their followers at the mercy of the enemy. In the London Transport Strike of 1911 the workers held out for some time, in spite of going hungry for weeks, and, when finally the proposition to resume work was put before them, they voted it down by a large majority. Immediately after the result was announced, Tillett, Jones and Gosling signed the agreement that



sent the dockers back to work under worse conditions than before the strike.

The leadership idea has cursed the working class movement from the beginning. At an earlier period those supporting the idea had motives of benevolence, its later supporters have also benevolent motives—but the benevolence is directed towards themselves. They make stepping stones of their followers to reach comfort and security.

In France, in 1793, Babeuf and his friends sacrificed their fortunes and lives in the attempt to relieve the misery of the mass of oppressed. The method was a sudden attack upon the central seat of power by a courageous and determined minority. Once the centre of power was captured, the conspirators were to issue the regulations that were to guide the people in the formation of the new society. Whether the mass of the people wished it or not, they were to be forced into the new regime. The energetic minority were to hold on to the power they had grasped until such times as the mass of the people understood and accepted the new social regulations.

Babeuf's intentions were excellent, but his method was rotten at the root. Instead of first getting the mass of the people to understand and desire the new programme, he proposed to force it upon them from without. The idea being that the intellectual few knew better what was good for the masses, than the masses did themselves.

Later, Blanqui, also a Frenchman, attempted to carry out Babeuf's idea, modified in the light of experience by altering the form of the secret organisation. Leadership of the many by the enlightened few was still the basis of the movement. In May, 1839, and again in May, 1848, Blanqui led an attack on the seat of power, but his attempts were crowned with a little success as Babeuf's. He also had good intentions, and paid for them by spending nearly half of his life in prison.

In 1836, an association of working men was formed in London that blossomed out into the first national movement of wage workers. This association took the name of "The London Workingmen's Association," and published an address, the concluding words of which put forward a new outlook for the oppressed, telling them to have done

with leaders and trust only in themselves:

"Be assured that the good there is to be must be begun by ourselves."—(Lovett's Autobiography.)

Marx has put the case more definitely, as follows:

"The emancipation of the working-class must be the work of the working-class itself."

Here the essence of the position is stated. Leaders, no matter how energetic, courageous, or good intentioned, cannot introduce fundamental social changes that the mass of the people do not understand. This, quite apart from the fact that fundamental social changes are not the work of this or that individual, but are the result of economic development, and are accomplished under the direction of the social group that will benefit by the social change.

In working out his emancipation, the worker must study the conditions that surround and oppress him. He must look to "great principles," and not to "great men" in his struggles. The great man view breeds arguments as to whether this man is a good leader, or that man a bad. The energy that should be given to a study of principles is wasted in endless arguments over idols; and apathy and discouragement often follow the finding of the idol's feet of clay.

He who would enter the land of promise, must first cut his path to the gate. A little study of elementary principles will clear off the brambles that strew the way. Armed with knowledge the worker can direct his organisation himself, and will then abandon the slavish worship of leaders.

GILMAC.

### WHO GETS IT?

Hence it has happened that the development of steam navigation, of railroads and telegraphs, of mechanical and chemical science, and the growth of the population, while enormously increasing productive power and the amount of material products—that is, of real wealth—at least ten times faster than the growth of the population, has given that enormous increase almost wholly to one class, comprising the landlords and capitalists, leaving the actual producers of it—the industrial workers and inventors—little, if any, better off than before.—Professor Alfred Russel Wallace.

### TO A NEW READER.

I have sometimes thought of compiling a little book. I should set about it thus: I would ask a great number of the people I met in a casual way what they understood Socialism to mean. The result would at least be interesting. Some would dispose of the matter in one word. "Bosh!" they would say—or "Rot!" These would be the foolish. Others would say: "Well, it means practical Christianity, or universal brotherhood, or some such idea." These possibly would be well-meaning people, but, as you will see, misinformed. Some there would be who would tell a long rambling tale, that Socialism was a beautiful dream about a dim and very distant future, but that all we could hope to achieve in our time would be to make life more and more bearable by means of reforms. Others, again, would say: "Just as the present State owns and manages the Post Office, or the Municipality owns the trams, the electricity works, the water supply, and the rest of it, so should the mines, the railways, canals, and even the factories be publicly owned." Others,—but enough of the others; perhaps you yourself are one of the others. Possibly you have seen or heard the word Socialism ever since you can remember anything, and still have only the foggiest notion of what it all means. Let us talk it over together.

Many people are afraid of anything with "ism" on the end of it. They think it is bound to mean something "cranky." They are not logical in this belief, for the words "Baptism," "Methodism," or "Nationalism," do not alarm them. Let us hope you are not one of those whom words frighten. After all, it is the idea behind all words that matters. You have only to mention the word "science" to some people, and they begin to look bored. And yet science is only reasoning from facts instead of jumping to conclusions.

Take a simple illustration. Who does not wonder at the beauty of the stars that twinkle over our heads on any clear night? For countless ages they have filled mankind with awe and wonderment. Thousands of years ago, the primitive shepherds guarding their flocks from prowling beasts of prey, saw the same stars as we, arranged in much the same "patterns." In one part of the night sky they clearly discerned Orion, the

mighty hunter, with club uplifted to attack the Lion. At his heel were his two dogs, Sirius and Procyon. In another part of the heavens were the Great Bear and the Little Bear; in another, Cygnus, the Swan. There were Castor and Pollux, the Twins; the Fishes and many other wonders. Between wandered the planets, and these had an influence over the lives of the little mortals who watched and studied them. Some were good or lucky stars; others were evil, malevolent stars. Quite a huge body of literature arose about them. The study was called Astrology. Gradually the movements and changes of the heavenly bodies were seen to follow a certain order. These rules or laws of movement were set down, and many men of all races tested them, and added to them, until at last the mighty hunter, the Lion, the Bears, the Swan, and all the rest of the menagerie faded from the sky, and the new definite knowledge of man about the stars became the science of Astronomy.

The same process took place with medicine. In olden days when a person took the fever or caught a mysterious illness in some way, they used to open a vein and draw off a quantity of blood, in the hope that the malady would run out with the blood. The medicines that used to be prescribed are enough to make one shudder. It seemed that nothing could be really effective unless it were horrible. And thus we read of concoctions of spiders, and toads, and vipers' tongues, dead man's skin, burnt hair, and all sorts of putridity. Health was indeed a blessing in those days. But as men observed and thought more deeply, they found that illness was caused by dirt, by bad air, by absence of sunlight, by wrong living; and having found the causes of ill-health, the remedies quickly followed.

Other funny old fellows of the past were the Alchemists. They were fond of making all sorts of messes with all sorts of substances. One of their great beliefs was that somewhere there could be discovered or compounded the Philosopher's Stone, and with this it would be possible to turn lead into gold. Needless to say, their search was unsuccessful, but out of the mass of information and knowledge they collected there grew up our modern Chemistry, one of the most exact and marvellous of our sciences.



And what has all this to do with Socialism? you will ask. I will tell you. It is because Socialism has had a similar history. You will be prepared to admit, I hope, that science is not at all a formidable word, and are further prepared, I trust, to see what there is in the claim of Socialism to be considered scientific. Very well. Now one of the first difficulties we have to deal with is that of prejudice. Most of us are filled with ideas that were implanted in us when quite young, fed and nourished in later years by newspapers and periodicals. Take history, for instance. All we were taught and remember is that the first people in these islands were the Ancient Britons. They stained their bodies with woad and looked upon the mistletoe as sacred. Then the Romans came and conquered them, but eventually had to leave rather hurriedly, leaving them to be harried by hordes of Angles, Jutes and Saxons. Later followed the Danes, and we were told some jolly little tales of King Alfred burning the housewife's cakes, or disguising himself as a harper and secretly visiting the enemy's camp. Then came the Normans, and we got tales of the curfew, of Hereward the Wake, and other worthies. And so on through the whole gamut: Richard the Lion Heart; the Black Prince; the Princes in the Tower; Henry the Eighth and his many wives; the Reformation; King Charles; Oliver Cromwell; Henrys, and Williams and Georges galore; the whole interspersed with a great number of awful battles, in which the English were victorious five times out of six. This is History as it is taught to workers' children. Simply legends, episodes and resounding names. But for upwards of a hundred years History has been treated more scientifically. Instead of looking upon it as a catalogue of entertaining events, men now ask, Why did this event happen, or that? Why did the Roman Empire flourish, and then decay? Why did the Reformation affect not only England, but Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Norway, etc.? Above all, what great driving motive caused different nations to act similarly? How did the discovery of America affect the world? Why have institutions like slavery, feudalism, religion, tribes, kingship, etc., been common to all races of mankind, although separated by thousands of miles, and with no possibility of contact? The answers to all these questions would take us too far in

a brief article, but this may be said: Mankind, without distinction of race, has always lived in groups or communities. All have broadly followed the same lines in their progress upward to civilisation. Some, like the Australian Blacks and the Red Indians, were left behind, and have become overwhelmed by more progressive races. The main line of progress has led from Savagery, through patriarchal society to Feudalism, or through handicraft to Capitalism. Each change has been marked, and actually caused by, changes in the methods of holding property, more particularly in the means of living. The stage we are now in is that of Capitalism. This, you will see at once, is quite independent of whether we have a King or a President; whether Lloyd George is a good man or a bad one; whether we are Catholics, Protestants, Atheists, Buddhists, or nothing in particular. Capitalism has three distinguishing features. First, the land, both the surface and the minerals beneath it, is privately owned. The earth and the fulness thereof are in individual hands. Second, the wonderful and ingenious tools, or machines, by which Nature's raw material is converted into wealth, are owned by individuals or small groups of individuals. Thirdly, the class to which you and I belong are compelled, in order to live, to hire our power to labour to those who have put a fence round Nature. The price of our hire is our wages, and our wages are determined by the cost of living. Not to make too long a story of it, the Socialist says in view of the obvious fact that this system does not work to the benefit of the vast mass of the people, it is time we substituted something more scientific. He points out what should be obvious to anyone with an unwarped mind. If, without access to Mother Nature, man perishes from the planet, is it not elementary common sense to suggest that the earth's great storehouse should be common property; that is, socially owned instead of individually owned? The Socialist is one who urges this social ownership. Even the tools and marvellous machinery by which the raw material becomes wealth, he claims are a social product and a social heritage. In every one of them is embodied the toil, the thought, the invention of thousands of separate human beings. They in turn owed all they possessed to the society of which they formed part. The Socialist says these tools are social; they should be socially

owned. And the next point. If you think over the words "working class," has it ever struck you as curious that such a term has arisen? The *working* class, those who do the work. If *all* worked, the term would have no meaning. Therefore there must be a class which does not work. And yet the class which does not work consists of immensely wealthy people. Without work, of course, there is no wealth. How curious, then, that the working class is composed of people who have no wealth. The wealth they produce is taken from them by those who own the earth and the means of living. A little has to be returned to them, to enable them to live. This is called wages. Without it the workers would die, or they would rise and destroy their masters. Either way the Capitalist system would come to an abrupt and violent end. Wages, therefore, are on the average just enough to keep the working class alive, and not unduly discontented.

It is not sufficient, however, that the working class should simply become indignant at their treatment or discontented with their lot. Clever men have looked into history and have seen that Capitalism grew out of feudalism, and feudalism out of chattel slavery, simply because the one was a logical development of the other. The stages of human society have followed one upon the other, just like steps, and mankind has only reached the higher by means of the lower. It is idle, therefore, to be merely angry or indignant at what is, after all, a natural growth. As was mentioned previously, society has changed in the past whenever the methods of producing wealth have changed. Our present method is by tools and instruments that are privately owned. It is because of this that the resulting wealth is also privately owned, and the workers consequently poor. The evils that follow this system are obvious. Overwork and unemployment, low wages and insecurity, dog the footsteps of the workers from childhood to premature death. They can only be remedied by abolishing this individual ownership of the means of life, and substituting ownership by the whole people. This would be *social* ownership, or Socialism. If you will read this journal regularly you will see many articles, telling how this change is to be brought about, and disposing of the objections and difficulties many people bring forward. If you are interested

we shall be glad to see you at any of our meetings, and if you are convinced of the truth of the Socialist position we shall be still more pleased to welcome you as a member.

W. T. H.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

Gentlemen,

Referring to Mr. Fitzgerald's reply to my letter (this month's issue of the *Socialist Standard*), I would like, for charity's sake, to leave on one side all matters, such as whether Mr. Fitzgerald's article was vituperative, whether my policy is akin to that of an ostrich, and whether I am in the habit of misapplying what I call my reason—matters upon which Mr. Fitzgerald and myself would probably still disagree in the long run, and to ask this simple question:—

Taking Mr. Fitzgerald's statement in his article in the December issue of the *Socialist Standard*, that "Every increase in prices . . . has called either for an increase of currency, or for some financial readjustment," what are the successive stages between the increase in prices referred to and the arrival in circulation of the increased currency? It would, of course, make the answer more interesting if a concrete example were given, starting with the definite reason for (or cause of) the particular increase in prices.

Yours sincerely,

J. HUTCHISON.

## ANSWER TO J. HUTCHINSON.

In his previous letter, appearing in the February issue of the *Socialist Standard*, Mr. Hutchison refused to examine or accept the facts and figures we presented in our criticism of "Plebs," in the December (1922) *Socialist Standard*, but brushed them aside contemptuously in favour of what he called his "reason." As, by the above letter, he still retains that position, it would, obviously, be a waste of time to supply any further facts or figures to such a critic.

When Mr. Hutchison is prepared to take and examine facts, as the basis of a discussion, we may deal with his question.

J. FITZGERALD.



March 23rd, 1923.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain,  
17, Mount Pleasant,  
London, W.C.1.

Dear Comrade,

I have only received the *Socialist Standard* for February this week, hence my delay in answering J. F.'s reply to my question: "How to distinguish a commodity from other things"; for if we can do that, we can tell without further aid, whether a sovereign is a commodity or not. J. F. says:—

"Whether a product of labour reaches the position of currency or not has no bearing on this question."

I claim that that is the point at issue, and that it is J. F. who bears on it, and tries to show that when gold is minted into sovereigns it is no longer a commodity, because:—

"When it has reached this position, and only then, it ceases to be a commodity, as it is no longer produced for profit, but as an official instrument set apart for currency purposes."

Are we to clearly understand from the above sentence:—

(a) That a use-value that has no surplus-value embodied in it, is not a commodity.

(b) That although gold has surplus-value embodied in it before it is minted, by some miraculous means it loses that surplus-value as soon as it is minted, and therefore, is no longer a commodity.

(c) Is there any "profit" produced in circulation. In other words, is value augmented in any commodity by means of circulation, and if not, why bring it into the discussion?

Yours fraternally,  
WM. WALKER.

#### ANSWER TO "W. W."

The questions in the above letter were answered in the previous reply appearing in the February *Socialist Standard*. "W. W." appears to have muddled himself by dragging in the question of circulation. Whether the explaining of the obvious will clear that muddle we cannot say, but perhaps it is worth the trial.

"W. W." wants to know whether he is "to clearly understand" from a sentence he quotes:—

"(a) That a use-value that has no surplus-value embodied in it, is not a commodity."

If "W. W." will read our statement again, he will see that his question has nothing to do with that statement.

First, as we pointed out, when a particular article is no longer bought and sold, is not produced for profit, but is used for the performance of certain work, it is no longer a commodity, no matter what it may have been before. An illustration may help to make the matter still more simple. A machine bought from the market and used in production is not then a commodity. It is in the stage of being consumed. True! In the case of bankruptcy, or for some other reason, it may be brought on the market again, and once more become a commodity. But this is only an occasional occurrence. The bulk of machines are used up, or consumed in production.

And so with sovereigns. The Government might gather together light weight coins, and, after melting them down, sell the gold ingot as a piece of gold, which would then be a commodity. But the sovereign is not produced for sale or profit, but as an article of utility in certain social transactions. It is being consumed in use while acting thus, and is not a commodity.

Question (b) is disposed of by the above.

Question (c) has nothing to do with the subject, as the word "circulation" was not used once throughout the whole answer. On the general question of "circulation" and "value," an answer to a correspondent in the March *Socialist Standard* covers the ground. J. F.

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## BROADCASTING THE WORKING CLASS.

There are thousands of people who to-day have adopted the habit of what has become generally known as "Listening-in." Everybody seems to have a desire to study this particular science, and we would be the last to suggest that scientific knowledge should not be acquired, especially amongst members of the working class. "Wireless Telegraphy," no doubt, is a very interesting subject, in view of its rapid development in recent years.

The conquest of the ethereal waves, possibly provide a very important landmark of progress in scientific research; but if we go a little further into the question, we shall find that whilst there are some sciences which are encouraged, there are others which are fettered and not allowed that freedom to develop which one might expect.

In these days, living as we do under Capitalism, there is one thing necessary before any progress can be made in scientific research—it must have the capitalist "Hall Mark" of profits, after which it may emerge forth into the daylight. That in itself, explains the present "Wireless" boom which is producing a rich harvest for the groups of capitalists like Godfrey Isaacs and others of the "Macaroni" type, derived, of course, from the sale of the instruments, accessories, etc.

Suppose for a moment we divert our attention to another phase of science—Social Science—that which deals with the various problems, faced day by day by the working class. We shall find that no such inducement is being given to the working class to investigate problems of this character in a scientific manner. Why? Because once the working class become afflicted with the desire to understand the cause of their poverty, even in numbers half as great as those studying "Wireless" at the present time, the position of the capitalist class would not be quite secure, hence we find them directing the minds of the working class into other channels.

This state of affairs provides the necessity for an organisation like the Socialist Party of Great Britain to come to the rescue, and thus provide the working class with the necessary scientific education, in the

shape of Economics, History, Politics and Sociology, etc.

By the correct understanding of these subjects they will equip themselves with necessary knowledge for accomplishing the social revolution, by wresting from the capitalist class that power which they the workers have hitherto presented to their masters, i.e., Political Power.

Therefore, we say to the working class, study the Social Sciences first, and thereby qualify to take your stand for the emancipation of your class. By doing so you will not only benefit yourself, but the community as a whole. For the first time in the history of the world, mankind will be able to enjoy the best that nature, aided by science, can provide. A. S. C.

#### BOOKS RECEIVED.

*Politics and Progress.* By RAMSEY MUIR. 3/6  
Published by Methuen & Co., 36, Essex  
Street, W.C.2.

*Production.* 3/6. Published by "The Daily  
Herald" League, 2, Carmelite Street,  
E.C.4.

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**The Socialist Standard,**

MAY



1923

**BUILDING WORKERS TRAPPED AGAIN.**

For about two years the employers have been having a triumphal march in enforcing wage reductions all round. So-called "skilled" and "unskilled," "manual" and "mental" workers, have all suffered from these reductions. The excuses given are monotonous in their sameness. "It is necessary to revive trade"; "Costs are too high and must come down"; "Prices cannot fall till wages are lower"; such are the slogans.

These statements are repeated despite the notorious facts that prices have not only not fallen after the reductions, but in many cases—i.e., milkman—the price of milk went up as wages were reduced.

In some cases the workers have at last decided to resist further reductions, and have made ready to fight the masters, even though conditions, as among farm labourers, could not be considered too hopeful. Another case was that of the building workers.

Some time ago these workers were bluffed by their officials into accepting a "Sliding Scale Agreement" which, these officials said, would guarantee that wages would never fall below the Cost of Living as given by the Board of Trade. Last year the falsity of this claim was completely exposed, and the Agreement

cynically broken by the workers' officials accepting a reduction of wages, *against the wishes of the men*, that in some cases went as low as 2d. per hour below the Cost of Living Scale in the Agreement.

Delighted with this success—that did not influence prices of buildings, but was so much extra profit to the employers—the masters put forward another demand, a few months ago, for a reduction of wages of 4d. an hour, and an increase of hours. The officials tried by trick and subterfuge to swindle the men into accepting this demand. They specially stressed the point that a refusal to accept might mean a strike or a lock-out. Of course, it might. Every resistance to a reduction of wages, or a worsening of conditions, necessarily means the risk of a strike or lock-out, and there is no particular difference in this case from the thousands of struggles undertaken by the Trade Unions in the course of their existence. But the men decided to test the situation, and by a huge majority voted to resist the demand. The figures were:—

For acceptance ...	42,606
Against ...	140,952
Majority against ...	98,346

(Daily News, 21/3/1923.)

The officials started a Publicity Campaign of a particularly weak kind, perhaps purposely. They claimed that the employers were—technically—breaking the Agreement. Even if this claim were true, the answer is crushing. The officials had already, *against the vote of the men*, broken the Agreement last year when they accepted a reduction of 2d. an hour below the Cost of Living Scale.

After considerable negotiation, the masters abated their demands from 4d. per hour reduction to 2d.

The men's officials demanded that the question: "Had the Agreement been broken," should be submitted to arbitration. The masters agreed, if their case *re* wages and hours was included. As the men had voted so decisively against any reduction, the officials were at first afraid to accept this condition. When, however, the Builders' Notice to the men was nearing its end, the officials offered to include wages. This was refused. But about 2

hours before the expiry of the Notice (13th April), the services of slimy Ramsey McDonald were successful in arranging a withdrawal of the Notice on the following—among other—terms:

"Conditionally upon the employers withdrawing their notices, it is agreed that interpretation of the National Wages and Conditions Council document *and the question of wages* be referred to the arbitration of an arbitrator appointed by the Lord Chief Justice, together with two assessors, one to be appointed by the operatives and the other by the building employers, the arbitration to be held on the above within seven days." ("Star," 13/4/1923.) (Italics ours.)

The question of hours is to be balloted upon by regions—not nationally—another dirty trick upon the men.

This arrangement is a deliberate swindle by the officials upon the men. It is a flat contradiction of the latter's vote. The President of the Building Trades Federation—Mr. G. Hicks—has stated that the Arbitrator will first interpret the Agreement, and if he endorses the men's view of it, the employers' wages demand will be ruled out of order. This is another piece of bluff, as the terms quoted above distinctly state, "*and the question of wages.*" The matter has now been settled by the Arbitrator, Sir Hugh Fraser, deciding to hear both sides, "not merely on the interpretation of the Agreement, but on the wages reduction claim." (Daily News, 23/4/1923.)

Under all the circumstances the men stood quite a fair chance of successfully resisting the masters' demands, and of putting a halt, for a time, at any rate, upon the rush down of wages that had taken place. As the men had given their decision, knowing the results of their vote, it was a distinct act of treachery on the officials' part to accept terms contrary to that vote. The curse of "Leaders" once more. It is to be hoped that the ballot on hours will be as overwhelming against any increase as the former vote.

It may be interesting, as showing how hard up the poor employers are, and how they are quite unable to pay even present wages, to quote the following from the Daily News, 23/4/1923, *re* the Marriage of the Duke of York:—

Preparations have been made everywhere for Londoners and London's crowd of visitors from the provinces, from the Continent, and from America to make merry.

**DINNERS AND DANCES.**

All the leading hotels and restaurants are arranging for gala dinners and dances in honour of the occasion.

There will be dancing every night during the week at the Savoy Hotel, and on the wedding night a special gala dinner, supper, and ball. The menu that night will include two new dishes in honour of the bride—a *poussin de printemps* Glamis Castle and *fraises glacees* Elizabeth. The hotel will be decorated with white roses, symbols of York, red roses for St. George, and white heather for Scotland.

Six Indian Princes are arriving at the Savoy on Tuesday for the wedding.

The Berkeley Hotel, on the route of the wedding procession, is giving a gala lunch, guests at which will be able to see the return of the Royal couple from the Abbey. The outside of the hotel will be brilliantly decorated.

**SHALL WE JOIN THE LABOUR PARTY?**

There are some people whose sole contribution to working class organisation is to moan perpetually about the multiplicity of parties, and to bleat day and night for unity. They are the mentally indolent who never trouble to understand the principles of the parties they criticise, and knowing nothing of the underlying causes of political antagonisms their criticisms have no value whatever. In the main, they are probably sufferers from the peculiar sensitiveness of confused and untrained minds, to which the very idea of conflict is intensely painful. They can be happy only in trying to reconcile opposites, and to weld all the mutually destructive elements around them into one apparent whole. Thrust into a world in which class war reigns supreme, they must veil the hideous reality, or suffer the mental torture of having to search for a solution and struggle to apply it. It is a type of mind infinitely valuable to the ruling class, who are themselves vitally interested in hiding facts from their victims. It is the fate of somewhat more discriminating advocates of unity, like George Lansbury, that they receive the support of these muddled sentimentalists. Lansbury wrote in the Daily Herald (31st March) on "A United Labour Party," urging all the small political bodies which claim to be Socialist to merge themselves into one. His argument is, that broadly speaking, we all have a common object; and that in addition to bringing its attainment nearer, we should be better able to meet the ruling class in day-to-day battles. Unity "should mean that all who



are members of our Trade Unions should be inside the Labour Movement." George Lansbury seems to believe that the working class position would be bettered by the formation of such a united front. Let us then examine the assumptions on which his argument rests.

Have the Socialists the same object in view as the Labour Party? Mr. Lansbury would say, that broadly speaking, they have; but in a sense, that is equally true of all the existing political parties. Owing to the present nearly universal adult franchise, no party can gain power except it has the support of a large section of the working class, hence no party dare omit to make the claim that it stands for the best interests of the workers. This does not involve the imputation of dishonesty to the openly capitalist parties. In addition to the motive of class interest, and often disguising it from them, is the sheer inability of some of the capitalist class to conceive of a social system other than their own. For them the best interests of the workers are bound up in the stability of the capitalist system.

We, on the contrary, know that the interests of the workers are bound up in the destruction of that system. The essentials of Capitalism are the existence of a politically emancipated, but propertyless working class on the one hand; and on the other, a numerically small class owning the machinery of wealth production. The workers are paid wages or salaries for operating that machinery out of the wealth produced, which is the exclusive property of the capitalists. The surplus in the form of rent, interest and profit remains in the hands of the latter. We do not pretend to regard as immoral either the system or those who profit by it. Had we lived at the time of the break up of Feudalism, it would have been our duty to fight for the capitalist form of private property, because that was a necessary advance on the previous form. The capitalists had a mission to perform, but now that their work is completed, another forward move is required. Capitalism, which was the only possible social organisation for the conditions prevailing at its inception, now has to go because conditions have changed. The present conditions are those to which Socialism alone is appropriate.

Just as the Feudal proprietors stood amid the ruins of their world and gazed back into the past, while the revolutionary capitalist class fought for the future, so now the capitalists are still contemplating the shadow of their former glories; while the workers struggle to use their achievements as the foundation of a new and higher form of society. And just as the representatives of that decaying system fought tooth and nail in defence of their class interests, and for the retention of the only stable organisation they knew, so also the capitalists will use fraud, force and cunning in their fruitless endeavour to maintain things as they are. The capitalists are fighting for their right to the private ownership of the means of life, and we fight to take it from them. When the workers awake to their class position they can by the conquest of the controlling force, the political machinery, recast society as they wish, because the minority, no longer in political control, will be powerless before them. We, of the Socialist Party, have no other aim than to give the workers the knowledge that will enable them to act. Because we think that conditions are ripe for Socialism now, and only knowledge is lacking, we are not prepared under any circumstances whatever to divert the workers' attention from the main object; we do not aid the capitalist class, nor do we seek their aid, because we consider these things will not serve any useful purpose; we do not endeavour to interest the workers in the administration, nor in the reform of the capitalist system, because we regard the one as a purely capitalist question, and the other as a means of prolonging the system which we are bent on destroying; we do not formulate immediate demands, because we know that the capitalists will not yield one jot of their position unless they are compelled, by circumstances, or unless the yielding is conceived by them in their own interests. Reforms of the latter type will be introduced by the capitalists and imposed by them, irrespective of our wishes; and when we are strong enough to challenge them we shall formulate the only demand worth making, the final demand. All who are prepared to fight for this are invited to unite with us for that purpose.

Is this the Labour Party's purpose, too? If it is not, why should we ally ourselves

with them? If the Labour Party's policy is one with which we disagree, we should have to oppose it whether an affiliated body, or otherwise. We consider our end can best be served by opposing all non-Socialist bodies, and apart from its effectiveness, it is hardly honest to enter a party merely to hamper it as disloyal members. Incidentally, we do not share the touching belief of the Communists in the simplicity of the leaders of the Labour Party. The visitor who asks a householder to be allowed through the door in order to smash the windows from the inside, really ought not to expect a very cordial welcome.

Let us now consider what the Labour Party does stand for. Although the rules of that Party prevent its candidates from running as Socialists, the word Socialism is often used by them. This is confusing, because the word is used by them to mean something essentially different from the meaning in which we use it. It is because the word is used so loosely and inaccurately, that we display our objects in every issue of this Journal. Mr. A. V. Dicey, a K.C., and not, therefore, likely to use terms loosely in the ordinary way, takes the trouble to explain in his "Law and Opinion During the 19th Century," that where he uses the word Socialism, all he means is State as opposed to individual enterprise. Generally speaking, when members of the Labour Party talk about Socialism they also mean State or Municipal Ownership or Nationalisation. Thus we have the *Daily Herald* (5th April, 1923) devoting its main Editorial to praise of Municipal Trading (tramways, electricity undertakings, etc.) because of their efficiency and the value of the profits in lowering rates; and the *Labour Magazine* (April, 1923, p. 562) quoting against Sir A. Mond his own praise of the State Department which engaged in house building.

The *Daily Herald* (24th October, 1922) quotes from the *Daily Mail* (7th August, 1916) the following:—

"Take away the working man's fear of being exploited by private capital, by nationalising the essential industries. Let him see that by doing a full day's work he is benefiting himself and the nation, and injuring no one . . . and Great Britain will enter on the new era as mighty in the time of peace as she proved herself in war."

After that in heavy black type the *Herald* continues:—

#### "THAT IS WHAT THE LABOUR PARTY MEANS TO DO."

Mr. Sidney Webb, one of the intellectuals, is responsible for a really priceless exposition of the Labour Party's kind of "Socialism" (*Daily Herald*, 1st March, 1922):—

"My Socialism is founded on the four rules of arithmetic, the Ten Commandments, and the Union Jack."

We have seen some curiosities, but nothing so extraordinary as this, but of course, not being intellectuals ourselves, perhaps we miss the point of it. The same person, in his "Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain," 1920, wrote (p. 1): "Over a large part of Europe definitely Socialist administrations are actually in office." It is because we believe that the Labour Party proposes to give us the same kind of "Socialism" as was visible all over Europe to Mr. Webb in 1920 that we oppose it. In passing I would like to draw Mr. Webb's attention to the fact that, while this "Socialism" may have been based on the Ten Commandments and the four rules of arithmetic, it surely lacked the other ingredient, the Union Jack. Still, if some of the Labour Party's mentally-fogged and imperialistic minor poets from the Clyde have their way, this may shortly be remedied.

The Webbs do not propose

"The abolition of the ancient institution of an hereditary monarch (pp. 108), but (pp. 109) unless the court can acquire better manners . . . it may be expected that the institution of monarchy . . . will become unpopular."

It is not intended to abolish private ownership (page 344) and people are encouraged to save money

"to be used on such conditions as may be arranged (which may quite reasonably include a rate of interest if this is found necessary or desirable) for the industrial undertakings and public services of the several public authorities." (Page 345.)

There will be "progressive taxation of incomes and of wealth passing by alienation or at death" and "differentiation against unearned incomes of more than a small amount" (page 346). In fact, we are, if the Webbs and the Labour Party have their way, going to keep capitalism just as it is now is in all essentials, except that we are to call it Socialism. That the limit of their



desire is Nationalisation is shown by the following (page 318):

"The process of transition from profit-making industry to public service, which has during the past quarter of a century made such great strides . . . will continue . . ."

The process referred to is in fact the process of transferring industries from individual to State control. This is not Socialism; is in itself directly harmful to the workers; and has not received, and will not receive, the least support from Socialists. Why is it impossible for these anti-Socialists to perceive that Nationalisation is "private ownership" in its last and most tyrannous form? While the capitalists can continue to receive interest on investments it is only because they still own and control the means of life. Does it matter to them whether they draw interest from commercial investments or on Government stock? Mr. Webb proposes that "Expropriation is to take the form of cash or Government securities, at their own market value . . ." (page 334), which is very nice, too—for the capitalists, but it is not Socialism.

Mr. Snowden, on the 20th March, 1923, introduced a Land Nationalisation Bill in the House of Commons, payment for the land to be made in 5 per cent. stock redeemable in 30 years. Mr. Snowden was quite right when he said (*Manchester Guardian Reconstruction* Number, October 26th, 1922):

"The British Labour Party is certainly not Socialist in the sense in which Socialism is understood upon the Continent."

nor, I would add, in the sense in which Socialism is understood anywhere else by Socialists.

Mr. Snowden went on to say, again quite correctly, that the Labour Party stands for "nothing more than the nationalisation of the land, mines, and essential public services. . . . The nationalisation of the essential public services referred to does not carry the Labour Party further than many Radicals, who would vigorously disclaim being Socialistic, are prepared to go."

Mr. Snowden himself, in the House of Commons on 20th March, 1923, used the words, "The Labour Party does not believe in confiscation" (*Labour Magazine*, April, 1923, page 561).

Now the Capitalists do at present own the means of wealth production. The Labour Party is either going to let them

keep their wealth or it is going to take it away from them. There is no third course. To talk of buying them out or giving them something of equal value is absurd. The power to exploit the worker is a monopoly power, and has no equivalent, and there is no accumulated wealth of more than insignificant proportion other than that in the hands of the capitalists themselves. True, it has been proposed to tax the capitalist out of existence, but even Mr. Snowden would hardly suggest that the capitalists will be spoofed into submitting quietly to confiscation provided the confiscation is called taxation.

Mr. J. H. Thomas, in his book "When Labour Rules," promises that the Labour Party will give the workers "a share in the management" of industry. With whom are they going to share it if not with the private owners? And why aren't the workers to have the whole? Mr. Thomas's answer is that (page 24) "Capital will be entitled to some return." The rich will, however, suffer "a proper limitation of their unearned wealth" (page 24). What, may I ask, is, according to Labour Party standards, a proper limitation of unearned wealth?

And it is for this that Mr. Lansbury wants us to join the Labour Party. He says (*Daily Herald*, 31st March):

" . . . the central authority . . . is not only legislative, but also administrative, and will become more and more so as we nationalise land, mines, minerals, transport, education, and many another industry."

If Lansbury does not want to see his efforts for unity wasted he had better join MacDonald, who is trying to arrange something of the kind with the Independent Liberals. MacDonald writes of the Independent Liberal M.P.s:—

"The best of the sixty ought to come over and act with the Labour Party. They share our immediate views on such questions as nationalisation, the capital levy, foreign policy, and not those of their leaders . . ."—(*The Socialist Review*, April, 1923, page 148.)

Needless to say, the Liberals do not share our views, and since all our energies will be directed to the destruction of capitalism, whether in the form of nationalisation or otherwise, Mr. Lansbury will not, if we can prevent it, nationalise anything. We fight nationalisation for the same reason that the Central Union of Industrial, Commercial and Transport Workers in Social Demo-

cratic Czecho-Slovakia fight it. In the Press Service (No. 207) of the International Federation of Trade Unions it is reported that the above Union bitterly protested against the Nationalisation of Forests:—

"This land reform and nationalisation of forests are in line with the political requirements of the Czech Bourgeois parties. . . . The Trade Unions cannot and will not leave anything undone to protect the workers on the forests and agricultural estates from economic and social pauperisation."

We recognise that this brings us into necessary conflict with the Labour Party, but the recognition is not, as Mr. Lansbury would imply, only one-sided. For Labour Party members to use their majorities on Borough Councils to exclude the *Socialist Standard* from the Public Libraries, is, although somewhat silly, a quite legitimate form of warfare; it cannot, however, be said to be exactly brotherly, can it, George? One of the Boroughs where this happens is red revolutionary Poplar, a place not unknown to Mr. Lansbury.

If the Labour Party were Socialist this anxiety on their part to prevent their members and others from reading the case for Socialism would be curious.

Mr. Lansbury says of us and of the Communists that we "advocate impossible propositions." It is interesting to have this candid acknowledgment from one Labour man that Socialism is an impossible proposition, but the proof of the pudding is in the eating. If the Labour Party can solve the problems which now face the working class by putting the brake on capitalist exploitation, and by making the Government and Municipal authorities the main and direct agents of that exploitation instead of leaving it to individual capitalists and private corporations, there is nothing more to say. If the Labour Party succeeds, then the advocates of Socialism are simply wasting their time. But if, in spite of all their patching and reforming, regulating and controlling, the contradictions of capitalism still produce their accustomed crop of class and international conflicts, and if, as I risk prophesying the Labour Party witch doctors fail to hypnotise the workers into contentment with their slavery, merely by labelling it differently, then recourse will still be had finally to the "impossible proposition" we advocate. We shall continue to advocate it because our knowledge and

experience teach us that these problems cannot be solved inside capitalism. In the meantime I would only suggest that other supporters of the Labour Party might be as candid as Snowden and Lansbury and admit with G. D. H. Cole ("The World of Labour") that:

"It is at least time that all the forces of Labour in this country learnt to forsake the old superstition that the Labour Party is a Socialist Party. . . ." (page 207).

If they did this they would be honest, which is refreshing; they would be able to conduct their experiments free from the misrepresentation of enemies and the confusion of friends, and finally they would more easily appreciate our proposition—Socialism—when they had experienced the failure of their own.

H.

### AN APPRECIATION.

Napier, New Zealand.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain,  
17, Mount Pleasant,  
London, W.C.1.

Comrades,

I have been a subscriber to your *Socialist Standard* for many years, and wish to express my appreciation of the very fine matter it always contains. I have always found it extremely helpful. I confess that during the early years following the Russian Revolution, and after reading many pamphlets and books written by the official heads of the Bolshevik Party, I for a time thought that they "had the goods," and that the policy of the *Standard* was not being supported by facts. I feel particularly grateful to the *Standard* and its writers on the Russian policy for the clear and able manner in which they analysed and presented the position, and convinced me that the Bolshevik policy, however necessary in Russia, was not suitable for application in the more highly-developed western nations. I feel it would be a calamity should the *Standard* ever have to suspend publication owing to lack of support. It is the finest little paper printed.

I enclose a postal note for 10s. Please renew my subscription for 12 months, and see you don't let me miss a copy, please. The balance, please place to the credit of your £1,000 fund. I regret I cannot afford more.

Yours fraternally,

A. H. G.



**WAR.**

"War: its nature, cause and cure," is the title of a book by Mr. G. Lowes Dickinson (Allen & Unwin, 4s. 6d.), which opens in a promising manner, but concludes in a manner decidedly disappointing, by reason of its utter lack of logic. A few remarks upon it, however, may serve to illustrate the Socialist view of a problem of vital importance to practically every member of the working class.

Mr. Dickinson brings out, in his terse, vivid style, the sheer senseless horror of modern warfare. He shows clearly and emphatically that its mechanical character leaves no room for the chivalrous sentiment which was supposed to find a place in the conflicts of the mediæval and ancient worlds. Indiscriminate slaughter and destruction, aided by all the resources rendered available by science, limited only by the limits of the productive forces controlled by the warring units, respecting neither age nor sex, recognising no distinction between "combatants" and "civilians," logically tending towards the complete exhaustion and annihilation of the human race itself—such is the picture the author draws for us. And who, remembering the four years from 1914-1918, and faced with the facts that the powers that be are arming to an ever-increasing extent and show no signs of settling their differences by any other methods, can say that this picture is overdrawn? Airships, submarines, poison-gases and liquid fire have made war a reality to the stay-at-home individual as it has never yet been in history. There is no escaping the issue; we must either end it, or it will end us. That is Mr. Dickinson's contention, and so far the Socialist has no quarrel with him.

Equally well can the Socialist agree with him over the cause of war, which he defines as "the greed of individual states for power, territory and markets" on the one hand, and the susceptibility of the working class to bellicose excitement on the other.

At the psychological moment the ruling class play upon the blind passions of their slaves in order to secure the necessary support in the pursuit of their political ambitions, arising out of their economic interests. Yet, left to themselves, the workers have no more desire for war than they have actual interests at stake therein. It is simply their ignorance concerning their

interests which renders them pliable tools in the hands of their exploiters.

Mr. Dickinson deals with the recent conflict in the light of these facts. He shows how each power manœuvred to try and make its enemies appear in the light of aggressors, in order to influence its own subjects with the false idea that they were fighting a purely defensive battle. He outlines the history of the Entente, and shows how it arose from the failure of the British Government to carry their negotiations with Germany to a successful conclusion. The German was proved to be the most dangerous manufacturing and commercial rival of Britain; hence the latter's policy of isolating him.

A secondary cause of the actual conflict Mr. Dickinson considers to be the existence of armaments. No armaments, no war, of course; but as the will to construct and use them precedes their existence, we are compelled to fall back upon the interests and ambitions of the class which controls the machinery of government as the prime and sole sufficing cause of war under present conditions.

To the logical mind it must appear that the cure for war lies in the removal of the cause, and this is where the Socialist parts company with Mr. Dickinson. His cure is not the removal of the cause, but rather that the cause itself shall somehow act contrary to its own nature. He proposes disarmament, and the League of Nations as the solution to the problem. The capitalist class are expected to surrender the only weapon they possess to protect their interests simply out of respect for the general welfare of humanity.

This shows clearly that the author does not fully appreciate the nature of the system of which war, as he deals with it, is the inevitable outcome. The capitalist state, no less than the capitalist individual, is compelled to avoid extinction by ceaseless expansion at the expense of its competitors. Markets are not things which can be utilised or dispensed with at will. They are the essential necessity to capitalist production. "Sell, or go out of business"—that is the law! And when all the various sections of the international capitalist class have more goods to sell than they can find purchasers for, what then, Mr. Dickinson? Will the League decide which section is to go bankrupt? If so, how will it keep order

in the dominions of the bankrupt power without armaments when the starving out-of-works are clamouring for maintenance?

No! Peace under Capitalism is a chimera! Even could the rival groups of financiers come to terms, it would only be in order to crush more firmly their rebellious slaves. It would be but an indication that war had changed its form and that the class struggle had at last overshadowed, in urgent and immediate importance, the sectional struggles of the masters. Armaments then would be more in demand than ever, for the masters never have dealt, and never will deal, with the workers in kid gloves. Force is the mainstay of their rule; without it they vanish.

Does Mr. Dickinson wish them to vanish? Nowhere does he face this plain issue. He disregards the fact the capitalist class control, through their political power, the economic vitals of society, and that nothing short of their removal from this dominant position will destroy the influence of their ambitions upon political affairs. Nothing less than the social revolution can make peace possible, for nothing less can abolish the competitive character of the existing mode of production which is at the root of all wars.

Mr. Dickinson gives no evidence that he understands what the social revolution means. He regards it as a danger, for which "foreign war" is the readiest cause. He has in mind events in Russia, and suggests that similar events in Western Europe can only have similar results. Thus, he evades the issue which is not: "Shall the workers of the West imitate those of Russia?" but rather: "Shall they organise as a political force to convert the socially necessary instruments of labour into common property?"

"Constituencies," says the author, "determine policy . . . it is, therefore, to the electors that I have addressed these pages." But the electors are left in the dark as to what policy they are to pursue even to gain the limited aims of their adviser. The political party which is to achieve the latter remains unmentioned. One can only infer that the author pins his faith to the Labour Party, since that Party is the loudest in its support of these aims. And what is the history of the Labour Party?

When the great call, "To Arms," in

defence of British capitalist interests arose, the "party of peace" echoed the call, and later shared the plums of office in Coalition with the other parties of the bosses! Do not forget that fact, fellow-workers! If you want a peace which is of any use to you, study Socialism; all else is illusion!

E. B.

**THE "PLEBS" AGAIN.**

Our exposure of the ignorance of the "Plebs" magazine editor on currency questions has driven that individual to various shuffles, as each attempted excuse has been shown up.

In the February issue of the "Plebs," our article in the December issue of the *Socialist Standard* is referred to, but not a single attempt is made to deal with the facts of that article.

While carefully avoiding our proof that prices had risen *before any alteration* of the currency had taken place—which one fact completely disproves all the rubbish about "inflation raising prices"—he tries to misrepresent our case by saying in reference to our figures:—"Therefore, it is argued there was no inflation of currency *relative to prices*."

As the "Plebs" had stated that "inflation of currency had raised prices," and as we proved that prices had risen first (thus knocking their whole case to pieces), it is easy to see how they are driven to misrepresentation in the attempt to hide the collapse of their case.

More! Despite our repeated exposure of the falseness of their claim that "inflation had raised prices," they repeat the same lie in their attempt at a definition of inflation. Their statement is that inflation "simply means an expansion in the volume of currency *leading to a rise in prices*," and the editor adds, "And the figures in the *Socialist Standard* merely go to show this."

As our figures proved exactly the opposite, the statement shows the contempt the editor of the "Plebs" has for his readers when he can write such a brazen lie.

Not only so, but his so-called definition smashes his own case. Our figures proved that the rise in prices *preceded* the expansion of the currency. Therefore, the expansion did *not* lead to a rise in prices; and, therefore, there was no "inflation,"



according to the "Plebs'" own attempted definition. In other words, the "Plebs" has given up its whole case.

Once again, an endeavour is made to save a plank from the wreck by stating that the *Socialist Standard* is wrong about convertibility, as "There was only nominal convertibility." We quoted the Act of Parliament. The "Plebs" dare not touch that point. The matter, however, is placed beyond all dispute and cavil by certain facts.

Thus, to take an illustration, in 1919 a couple of private individuals drew out 110,000 sovereigns, weighing more than 18 cwt., from the Bank of England, in exchange for Treasury Notes (see *Daily News*, 28/2/1920).

If the changing of Treasury Notes into sovereigns to the extent of nearly a ton is only "nominal" convertibility, it would be interesting to know what is "real" convertibility!

There the matter may rest. Not one of the facts, figures, or arguments of the *Socialist Standard* on this question has been met or touched by those who, either from ignorance or fraud, have supported the capitalist lie about "inflation raising prices."

J. FITZGERALD.

Readers who find it difficult or impossible to obtain the **SOCIALIST STANDARD** through the usual channels should communicate with the Head Office, 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.1., when regular delivery will be arranged.

### S.P.G.B. PROPAGANDA MEETINGS

LONDON DISTRICT.

#### Sundays:

Finsbury Park, 6 p.m.  
Clapham Common, 6 p.m.  
Tottenham, West Green Corner, 7.30 p.m.  
Victoria Park, 6 p.m.  
Walthamstow, Church Hill, 7.30 p.m.

#### Mondays:

Highbury Corner, 8.30 p.m.

#### Thursdays:

Dalston, Queen's Road, 8.30 p.m.

#### Saturdays:

Edmonton Green, 8 p.m.

## THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

### OBJECT.

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

## Declaration of Principles.

### THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain

#### HOLDS—

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.



# THE Socialist Standard

The Official Organ of **THE SOCIALIST PARTY** of Great Britain.

No 226. Vol. 19.]

LONDON, JUNE, 1923.

[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.]

## THE CONSTITUTION OF THE FUTURE.

Among a variety of matters reviewed at the I.L.P. Conference in early April was a resolution which, as reported by the "Daily Herald" (4/4/23), "aimed at the abolition of the Cabinet system, and the substitution of Government by committees with Ministers as chairmen." An indeterminate discussion took place, ending in the questions being referred to a Committee of the National Administrative Council for consideration. The question was raised at the Conference, of course, because the Labour Party, to which the I.L.P. is affiliated, hopes to become the Government Party within the next few years: and the fact that it was raised throws an interesting light upon what it will do when that time comes.

What is the Cabinet? It is the Committee of Ministers who preside over all the important state departments. How it is chosen? By the Prime Minister, whose selections require only the King's approval. Who chooses the Premier? The King, usually on the advice of the retiring Prime Minister, and having regard to the predominating party in Parliament. The business of the Cabinet is to regulate foreign and colonial affairs, issue temporary decrees, re-appoint to vacant offices, introduce legislation into Parliament, and so on. Practically the whole initiative of Government is vested here: in fact, with the acquiescence of the majority in Parliament, the Cabinet is the Government.

The Cabinet system in its modern character was developed by the representatives of the merchants, bankers and land-owners, after their political victory of 1688. They had robbed the monarchy of much of its power, but by no means wished to

abolish it. Its presence at the head of their system sanctified their rule, by reason of the sentimental veneration with which wage-workers, shopkeepers, small manufacturers, etc., regarded, and still regard it. They took care, however, to keep it well in hand. The King no longer acted independently, but either "in Council" (in which case the counter-signature of the Privy Council was necessary), or "in Parliament" (in which case consent of the Commons and Lords was necessary). In practice, of course, sittings of the full Privy Council proved totally impracticable. There was never enough agreement amongst its members upon the policy to be pursued, or the legislation to be framed. Besides, in the matter of shaping bills, no matter what views might carry the day in Council, they were of no effect unless the legislation embodying them recommended itself to Parliament. Therefore, this clumsiness was overcome by that party undertaking the task which for the time being could command a majority in Parliament.

A body would be formed of five, seven, or more members of the Privy Council (nowadays the number has increased to round about twenty), all belonging to one party, to fill the ministerial posts. The holders of all the more important offices in the Government, says the "Encyclopædia Britannica," are "generally selected as the influential politicians of the party, rather than for special aptitude in the work of the departments." (Coalitions are rare, and formed for joint action in times of emergency, when opposing parties deem it expedient to sink their differences temporarily, as did the Liberal, Unionist and Labour Parties during



the late War). This body, the Cabinet, discharged all the important functions nominally performed by the "King in Council."

Meanwhile, what powers remained to the Sovereign were taken over by this or that State office, until the monarchy to-day remains nothing but a figure—"the mascot," as it has been called, of the ruling class.

Now this was a good system for the Capitalist class. It provided, and still provides, the various sections of Capitalist interests with a convenient means of mobilising their votes in Parliament; and they have a check upon what is done "in Council" by the yearly financial votes. (The House of Commons exercised that power as recently as April 11th last by refusing to go into Committee of Supply on the Civil Service Department.) The Cabinet system, and indeed Parliament itself, which is of much earlier growth, are products of times when the State was very little concerned with the organisation of industry; and whenever the requirements of modern Capitalism make it necessary for the State to take control of some branch of industry, it simply becomes the responsibility of one of the ministries, and is developed with the direct assistance and advice of Capitalists, through the committees, commissions, boards, etc., that all converge on the Cabinet. Yes, the Cabinet system serves the Capitalists very well.

But how different will be the requirements of the working-class when it comes to power! The business of production will then be the supreme concern of the Commonwealth: the co-ordination of the activities of workers in mines, fields and schools, on the roads, on the sea, in the laboratory, studio and theatre—with the purpose of furnishing the healthiest and most joyous life for all. Those who are to enjoy the fruits of labour will also be those who do the work; and from both points of view, public business will be the intimate concern of each one.

It follows that the problems with which it will be called upon to deal will be different also. For example, instead of devising ways to pacify the unemployed, it will have to decide how an over-plentiful supply of labour-power in one branch of production can be used to lighten work in another. Instead of protecting home Capitalists against

foreign competition, it will determine, in consultation with workers of other lands, in what part of the world a given kind of goods can be most economically produced. And so on.

It is too early yet to pronounce in detail what form the administration of this business will take. That will be for the victorious workers to decide when the time comes. But its outlines are clear. It will not be, as heretofore, a *Government*, ordering affairs from the top, with merely the acquiescence of the mass of the people. It must have the character of an Executive, giving effect to the decisions of the workers themselves. Every public office must be elective, responsible, and revocable.

We do not share the fear of Mr. Charles Trevelyan, M.P., who at the I.L.P. Conference took part in the debate referred to. He said: "We do not want a pledge-bound or an oath-ridden party. When you comrades join us in the House of Commons, after the General Election, we want vital representatives and not merely delegates—men who are going to think and act for themselves."

Why, the Socialist organisation of industry implies control by the workers. Anything else would be a bureaucratic State, a travesty of Socialism. We are convinced that when the workers are ready to take possession of the means of life they will be ready to begin to control them democratically. Moreover, a delegate can and should be a vital representative. On some matters it is possible to give detailed instructions, on others, general orders only, the particular execution of them being left to the intelligence of the delegate. But in all matters the will of those whose work he is doing, and not his own, should determine his actions. The contrast between Capitalist and Socialist democracy is sharply indicated—by a paragraph in the Manifesto of the International Working-men's Association, issued in May, 1871, immediately after the crushing of the Commune of Paris. It refers to the Communards' design for the new constitution:

"Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to represent the people in Parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in Communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the

search for the workmen and managers in his business. And it is well known that companies, like individuals, in matters of real business generally knows how to put the right man in the right place, and, if for once they make a mistake, to redress it promptly."

The Cabinet system, therefore, in the Socialist Commonwealth, is as unthinkable as the private ownership of the means of life. If the I.L.P. questions for a moment whether a Labour Government would discard that system, it is because it knows a Labour Government could not and would not inaugurate Socialism, notwithstanding that it has placed it upon its programme. Only a party of revolutionary workers, organised for that purpose, and that alone, is equal to the task.

A.

### THE HEART OF ENGLAND.

Who was the great traducer who once said, "The *Daily Mirror* for those who can't read, and the *Daily Mail* for those who can't think"? Surely that was in the nebulous period now referred to as "before the war." Should he have evaded the Roll of Honour, and have attained either the "dole" or the O.B.E., it is devoutly to be hoped he will emerge from his deserved obscurity and revise at least the second half of his glib, but glaucous epigram. For does not the *Daily Mail* devote two columns each day to "What Our Readers Think"? It does. For the expenditure of one poor humble penny, any day, one can be stirred to one's inmost wave-lengths by the spectacle of our nation doing its thinking. Heart-throbs by the hundred-weight, and thinking by the rod, pole or perch. Any issue will do.

Take this one of January 13th. Mr. Sumner-Jones, hailing from proletarian Piccadilly, leads off with:

"France, through your invaluable pages, can see into our hearts, and recognise the fact that the blind policy of our Government is not approved by the British people."

There now: You'd never have thought that, would you? But this is more thoughtful:

"May I thank you for your splendid stand for France, almost alone as you are and in opposition to the section of the Press, which has learnt nothing and forgotten everything."

That is from Mr. Brenton Gray, a gentleman with two names, but only one brain. You might possibly suggest that the "section" he speaks of having learnt nothing, could not possibly forget everything; but there you see, we cannot all be thinkers. Then there's Samuel Willie, from Yeovil. He says: "Your leading article, 'God Speed to France,' 'should re-act on the heart and conscience of every unselfish patriot throughout the Empire.'"

Is it necessary to add that Sam Willie is an unselfish patriot?

Then "Regular Subscriber" insists that "all that is best in the British Empire will be with you."

Can one doubt that "Regular Subscriber" is included in "all that is best"?

"If Bonar Law could only read the minds of the people he would get a surprise," says another original possessor of grey matter. Let H. S. take heart. The feat is not an easy one, and "surprise" is quite an inadequate term if it were accomplished.

Mr. Davis, of Brighton, is a true Briton. "I thoroughly agree with the French action as, I hope, does every other true Briton."

As W. S. Gilbert phrased it:

"For he himself has said it,  
And its greatly to his credit"

Mr. Sadler is flattering. "It is, indeed, like you to side with common-sense and justice."

The Editor's blushes are not recorded. Perhaps he was looking for an antemetic. Modesty you will see is equally the possession of the Editor and his readers. As F.H. puts it: "Every intelligent patriotic man is behind you."

We are, indeed, a great nation; though it is sadly to be feared that modesty will prove our undoing. Capt. James Murphy reminds us of the saying of the German officer to the British Officer: "You will always be fools, and we shall never be gentlemen." Notice the implication. Modesty forbids our dwelling on it. As that poet of pacifism and true British modesty, Rudyard Kipling has enshrined it:

"Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,  
An humble and a contrite heart;  
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget—lest we forget."

W. T. H.



**THE PESSIMISTS.**

There are certain people who show that, to some extent, they are acquainted with the Socialist philosophy, and yet will be heard to utter the sentiment that it is useless talking about the principles of Socialism as the workers, from the point of view of intelligence, are hopeless.

This pessimistic view is often stated by many who have done next to nothing in furthering Socialist knowledge, and perhaps, when noticing the lack of knowledge displayed by the average worker in a discussion of a political and economic character, form the above opinion. But, of course, the workers are not hopeless from an intellectual point of view, whatever a superficial view of their mentality may disclose, for it should be obvious that as they are able to assimilate all the ideas connected with the details of the production and distribution of wealth in modern society, so will they in due course assimilate those ideas which will enable them to secure their freedom from capitalist domination.

To accomplish the establishment of a new form of society by means of a social revolution, which means that there must first take place a revolution in thought, entails more than the work of a moment; it means a considerable amount of toil to those who carry out the many functions associated with the organisation of the working class. As those who do the work can testify, it means long and laborious work, and those who shrink from the task because it involves "hard labour" should realise that they are leaving a larger field to the enemies of Socialism.

In the advocacy of revolutionary ideas the revolutionist encounters many prejudices and preconceived notions, and one can hardly fail to notice when in discussion with members of the working class on the subject of Socialism, how the force of tradition affects their mental outlook. This point may be overlooked by many who lament the "slow" progress made by the workers in forming revolutionary conceptions.

"The tradition of all past generations weighs like an alp upon the brain of the living," says Marx, and those whose interest lies in the retention of the private property institutions use all the means at their disposal to preserve the traditional illusions, such as religion, and the abstract notions of justice, morality, etc.

Ideas drag on long after their falsity has been exposed. The workers, in the main, are not acquainted with the scientific method of analysing and classifying their conceptions. To overlook or under-estimate the force of tradition is a sad mistake, and that this mistake is frequently made does, to some extent, explain the psychology of those who express the pessimistic view stated above. They appear to think that all that is needed is for one to postulate a logical proposition and its immediate acceptance is assured, thus disregarding the effect of the multifarious ideas that have been gathered in the past.

Leaving aside the part played by tradition, there are other factors in operation to-day which act in moulding the worker's ideas. To take the case of the child as an example. From the moment when it begins to form ideas, it imbibes the superstitions of its parents, and later, when at the elementary school, it receives but the barest of "education," which consists largely of an instruction in capitalist "virtues," both religious and secular, from the "love of God" to the "love of country." It has been said of certain of the Jesuits that they have expressed the opinion that, provided they had control of the child's education until it reached a certain age, that early training would suffice as an effective check against any antagonistic influences that were encountered later in life. While it is well not to interpret this view too rigidly, nevertheless it is certainly true that the ideas assimilated when young have a considerable influence on the mental make-up of a great number of the workers, and the clergy do not fail to recognise the value of obtaining control of the education of the child. But what applies to the sycophantic priest with his means of saturating the minds of workers with superstition, applies with equal force to those who have control of the secular forms of "education." While it is true that religion has, to a great extent, lost its hold over the minds of the workers, they have imbibed other notions from their masters equally fatal to their class interest. It does not follow that because the worker does not concern himself with religion, that he necessarily exercises his thoughts in the interest of his class, as may be seen in the fact that many who hold definitely anti-religious views are among the opponents of Socialism. Where the priest cannot secure

a hold, those in control of the secular forms of "education" usually succeed. In the schools the children are not taught the main factors in the process of wealth production. In history the teaching mainly consists of the deeds and misdeeds of kings and queens, and the records of those who have displayed so much "gallantry" in making England a "land of hope and glory." What passes under the name of education is little more than an instruction preparatory to entering the labour power market, where they are forced to sell their energy in order to live. It is small wonder that, when the young workers enter the productive area, they are handicapped against grasping ideas which are contrary to those inculcated into their minds in infancy. The ideas expressed in the workshop are generally of the orthodox form; it is unusual to meet with anybody who has the faintest inkling of the working class position, or has become acquainted with the line of action necessary to the establishment of Socialism. Even with those who are generally proclaimed the "rebels," the confusion of thought is amazing.

Thus, when we take into consideration both the influence of tradition and the instruction given in childhood, there is little room for wonder that the advocacy of revolutionary ideas does not obtain "quick returns." There is the further point that while the capitalists have control of the Press they are able to disseminate their views by means of the publication of numerous newspapers, books, magazines, etc., whilst Socialists can only at present publish their views in a journal that reaches but an infinitesimal portion of the working class. In comparing the number of meetings held, we have the same enormous difference, where the capitalists and their agents are able to hire the best and largest halls and hold many meetings, we can hold but few in consequence of our limited financial resources. So the dice are loaded heavily in favour of the capitalists, nearly all the channels of "education" being held by them. But the recognition of this does not make us pessimistic; on the contrary, it acts as a spur to action. The work of enlightening the workers in the knowledge of their slave position and the way out from their slavery, is essential to the establishment of Socialism. The Socialist way out of capitalism is the only way; consequently

the very necessity of Socialist propaganda, as a prelude to the overthrow of capitalist society, and the establishment of Socialism, is sufficient to guard us against pessimism. But in carrying on the work of Socialist education, one qualification is necessary, and that is, we must be patient. It is recorded by Karl Kautsky that when in conversation with Frederick Engels, the latter said, "We have learned to wait, and you in turn must learn to wait your time."

But, contrary to the sentiment of the poet, he who only waits does not serve the cause of Socialism, so let all those who can, put their shoulders to the wheel and help to break down those intellectual barriers that stand in our way in the struggle for the abolition of human slavery. Our way out of present misery is not only the correct road to travel, but it is the *only* road open.

R. REYNOLDS.

**HUNGER!**

"Mr. Jones-Brown, the senior partner of Messrs. Miller & Company, I knew myself, for after I wrote 'The Wake of the Sun,' it was read by Glass and sold to them for fifty pounds. When this bargain was finally struck, Mr. Jones-Brown said to me: 'Now, Mr. H., as the business is all done, would you mind telling me quite frankly to what extent this book of yours is true?' I replied: 'It is as true in every detail as it can possibly be.' 'Then you mean to say,' he asked, 'that you actually did starve as you relate?' I said: 'Certainly, I did, and I might have made it a deal blacker if I had chosen.' He fell into a momentary silent reverie, and shaking his head, murmured: 'Ah, hunger is a dreadful thing; I once went without dinner myself!'"

MORLEY ROBERTS.

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### YOU'D BE SURPRISED.

Sir Oswald Stoll, writing in the *Referee*, April 15th, 1923, disputed the definition of value given by Karl Marx in *Capital*. He says that Adam Smith's work, "The Wealth of Nations," although it yields no support to Marx, nevertheless contains the fatal error on which the Socialism of Marx is founded, i.e., that "labour is the real measure of the exchangeable value of all commodities." Sir Oswald then says:—

"It requires little wisdom to realise that the labour which is alleged to be the real measure of the exchangeable value of coal, for instance, must include the labour of nature. Human labour cannot begin where nature finishes, because nature never finishes. Nature made the coal by heating and compressing vegetable matter; nature made also the materials used by labour in mining the coal. The term 'labour' is therefore too abstract and general for such specific application. Hence labour cannot be 'the real measure of the exchangeable value of all commodities.'"

Sir Oswald is described by the *Referee* as a keen student of economics and socialism. His description of the part played by Nature in the production of wealth was clearly outlined in the early chapters of *Capital*, where it formed part of the careful analysis of a commodity. On page 10, "Swan and Sonnenschein" edition, Marx says:—

"The bodies of commodities are combinations of two elements—matter and labour. If we take away the useful labour expended upon them, a material substratum is always left, which is furnished by nature without the help of man. The latter can work only as nature does, that is, by changing the form of matter. Nay more, in the work of changing the form he is constantly helped by natural forces. We see, then, that labour is not the only source of material wealth, of use-values produced by labour. As William Petty puts it, labour is its father and the earth its mother."

The work performed by Nature, however, goes on independent of the form of society under which men live, but Nature is neither capital nor the capitalist class; so the task still lies before Sir Oswald to prove where that class renders any assistance. Till now he has only accounted for the same factors as the Socialist: Man and Nature.

Of course no criticism of Marx would be complete that did not prove, or attempt to prove, a contradiction against him. Most of the critics claim that Marx contradicted himself in the later portion of his works, but Sir Oswald is so keen that he discovers a contradiction that everybody has apparently overlooked in the very first chapter.

He accuses Marx of "converting the abstraction of labour into a material body; a congelation of labour, and calling it value." Of course what Marx really did was to show that the labourer worked upon the Nature-given material and changed its form or place. His labour thus became congealed in the finished product, and is the only thing—material or social—possible of measurement for the purposes of exchange.

Marx analysed the labour contained in commodities and found that it must be looked at from two points of view in order to obtain a clear idea of value. It must be looked at from the concrete side, i.e., as labour of a definite kind that produces a particular article; for example, tailoring that results in the production of a coat—a use-value. It must also be looked at from the abstract side, i.e., as labour in general without regard to the particular way in which it is expended. In viewing labour this way it is necessary to forget that it is employed to produce coats, boots or tables, and simply look at it as the using up of a portion of society's human energy. It is this general energy, or simple human labour, that is at one time spent in producing coats at another in producing tables, that forms the basis of value. In other words, human energy, at the same time, as concrete labour, produces use-values, and as abstract labour produces values. It is the fact that all articles produced represent proportions of simple human energy that enables them to be exchanged for one another through the medium of money.

Sir Oswald, the amateur economist, like all the professionals that have tried to demolish the Marxian theory of value, is left stuttering when asked to show what else but labour-power can be the real measure of exchange value. His alleged contradiction is that Marx before stating that "a congelation of labour is value," had already said "that utility is value." What Marx really says is that use-value is the utility of a thing. He devoted several paragraphs to the task of showing that use-value, or usefulness, cannot possibly be the basis of exchange-value; though he states quite definitely that all commodities must possess use-value, otherwise they are unsaleable.

In his analysis of a commodity Marx discovered it to consist of: a material substratum supplied by Nature, use-value or

usefulness and exchange value. In addition it was the product of labour. How is the exchange value of a given commodity measured? Not by its material body, nor yet by its usefulness. Sir Oswald's contradiction is therefore piffle, and the result of his inability to understand ordinary economic terms.

The gem of Sir Oswald's economic absurdities is contained in the following:—

"The theory that human labour is either value or the measure of value was killed in a sentence by the late Archbishop Whateley when he reinforced the truism that 'Pearls are not valuable because men dive for them; men dive for them because they are valuable.'"

Both the parson and the stage manager were answered by Marx before they raised this objection. "Diamonds," said the latter, "are of rare occurrence on the earth's surface, and hence their discovery costs, on the average, a great deal of labour-time. . . . If we could succeed at a small expenditure of labour in converting carbon into diamonds, their value might fall below that of bricks." Similarly, if real pearls could be made as easily as beads, they could be bought for the same price as beads; but they cannot be so made; much diving has to be done for every one that is placed on the market and much labour of other kinds as well.

Sir Oswald winds up by saying: "It will be well to seek a real definition of value." Those that seek shall find; let him search with all diligence, and then submit his results to those who do understand Marx.

F. F.

### SQUARE PLUGS IN ROUND HOLES.

How many working-class children follow the occupations to which they are adapted, and which would hold their interest? One could almost count them on the fingers of one hand.

One boy is of a mechanical turn of mind and is fond of the working of machinery and contriving crude mechanical toys; he becomes a baker's boy. Another loves the open air and the things that grow in the fields and hedges; the mechanism of plants and the ways of the bee, the butterfly and the bird are intensely interesting and wonderful to him; he becomes an office boy. The sea and the lands beyond the sea calls

yet another; he longs to haunt the lonely spaces of the earth; he becomes a grocer's boy in a shop in a populous city. Such are the instances that teem around us.

The cause of this maladaptation is the source of the many evils that are constantly with the working classes.

The working class child is born into a system that a certain period puts before him the problem of finding a master or starving. He must obtain employment of some kind regardless of his aptitude or desires. The family at home is growing; father's wages no longer suffice to meet the needs, and consequently the child must accept the first job that offers, and if he is lucky (!) that means following the same trade until industry has sapped all his energy and eventually thrown him out upon the scrapheap to beg or find a place in the workhouse.

The private ownership of wealth, with consequent dependence upon wages of the vast majority of the population, is the cause of this maladaptation.

When wealth becomes common property and is democratically controlled by the whole people there will be such an abundance of workers available that the necessary work of society will not be able to absorb all this energy. It will then be possible for all the members of society to experiment in occupation until they find the one that suits them best.

This will be better for society, as work that is loved is better performed than toil that is hated. It will be better for the members of society because they will be carrying out functions that will be a fruitful means of happiness. It will be better for the generations that follow because the ideas that teem in the minds of millions will have ample opportunity to be put into operation and provide stepping stones for yet greater happiness in the æons that are to come.

Let us then join together to root out the cause of maladaptation, and bring in the new society that is full of such promise.

GILMAC.

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**THE "BENEFITS"  
OF NATIONALISATION.**

When the Miners' Federation of Great Britain were arguing their claims before the body known as the Sankey Commission, they put forward a strong plea for the Nationalisation of the Coal Industry. The representatives of the miners stated that such a measure would benefit industry and commerce as a whole, and enable a "fair" wage to be paid to the miners. How these two things were to be achieved was not made clear.

Indeed, a short examination would show that the two things were, in many respects, contradictory. Industry as a whole could only benefit if the price of coal was reduced. From the ordinary Capitalist point of view this can only be done by lowering the cost of production. In general, there are two methods by which such a result could be obtained—one by increased efficiency in the management and methods of production; the other by cutting down the amount paid in wages.

Nationalisation certainly *could* increase efficiency to a very large degree, by co-ordinating the business of the various mines, by abolishing competition, and by a better system of distribution whereby customers could be supplied from the nearest pits. Moreover the familiar sight of

long trains of empty trucks passing each other on their way across the country to distant collieries, would disappear under any sensible scheme. But how would this affect the workers in both mining and transport?

The more efficient the methods became, the fewer the number of workers required in the production and transport of each ton of coal. Unless trade and industry increased to such an extent that the larger demand for coal allowed of the re-employment of these redundant workers, the effect of the improved efficiency would be an increase in the number of workers unemployed—hardly a desirable result. Nor is the matter of wages in any better position.

If a margin existed from which better wages could be paid the Capitalists as a whole would object to the Government "pampering idle and lazy workers with extravagant wages." This stunt is being pushed forward by the capitalist with great vigour at the present moment, and demands would be made upon the Government to bring those wages to what is sweetly termed "an economic level." The increased number of unemployed would be used to enforce this demand in more ways than one. All this was pointed out at the time of the Sankey Commission in the pages of the SOCIALIST STANDARD, but just now there is a very striking practical illustration of these truths.

In Belgium, in addition to post office and telephones, the railways are nationalised. The wages paid to the majority of the workers employed in these nationalised industries are so poor that:—

"During 18 months efforts were made to increase wages by means of deputations to the Ministers of the Departments, but six months ago this method of discussion was summarily ended, and since then the discontent having no constitutional outlet, has steadily grown."—"Daily News," 17/5/1923.)

The discontent has now reached the stage where thousands of these workers decided to strike for the purpose of trying to improve their conditions. Among other pleasures Belgium enjoys conscription. The answer of the Government to the strikers was to call up 6,000 of the army reserve from among these workers and to order them to carry on the work under military orders.

Here is a splendid example of the "benefits" of nationalisation, and of how well

off the workers are in such cases. It shows how much more rapidly and effectively "discontent" can be dealt with when the workers take strike action to enforce their demands.

It may be said that as conscription is not in operation here, the Government could not use the same means against any of their employees in case of a dispute. This is a fallacy. The Government could declare the matter one of "National Emergency," and would call upon soldiers, sailors, etc., to carry on the industry for the time being.

The Belgian State workers have one point in their favour. The holiday season to the Continent is now beginning, and the Capitalists in Belgium, who, apart from their own resorts, take a substantial toll from those travelling through the country to Switzerland, Italy, etc., may consider it more profitable to give way to a small degree rather than run the risk of losing on the stoppage of holiday traffic.

We hope the men will win in their action, but the position they occupy should be a complete lesson to those of the Miners' Federation and the Labour Party here, who imagine that "Nationalisation" can cure any evil the workers suffer under to-day.

**CORRESPONDENCE.****WHY POLITICAL ORGANISATION?**

Dear Editor,—I have read with interest the questions put forward re Comrade Littler and the answers thereto, that have appeared through the medium of the *Standard*.

To me those answers require further elucidation, as for instance, your answer to the second question, which states, "The workers' organisation must be upon the basis of their class." Do you infer by the above statement that one organisation only is requisite, and it must include a political and economic organisation?

I take it one organisation on the industrial field is "on the basis of its class."

Again, one reads in answer to the same question, "As we have pointed out on various occasions, economic development has travelled beyond the limits of 'Industry' in numerous directions, and therefore, the workers' organisations must cover a wider area than the 'Industry' even to keep pace."

What directions has economic development taken beyond the limits of "Industry," and what have the workers' organisation to keep pace with apart from "Industry"? In answer to the first question we find the following:—

"Conceivably Socialism could be established by the political party alone." To me, conceivably is a relative concept, and the limit within which a concept is valid varies concomitantly with variations in the phases of social evolution. All Socialists agree that the coming social revolution will do away with the State, and all political institutions, which means all political institutions will lose their political character and become simple administrative institutions for the needs of society.

To bring the above social conditions into existence implies the removal of the existing social conditions which demands the existence of the political structure.

All political parties who are attempting to capture the powers of the State, for the purpose of converting those so-called means of oppression into agents of emancipation, fail to understand that the material conditions are responsible for the existence of all political institutions, and so long as political parties persist in grappling only with the effects of those material conditions, then so long will those effects remain in existence.

As we have social production, i.e., associated labour (under capitalism) that very fact implies organisation right where production takes place, namely, in the workshop, for the specific purpose of taking the economic power out of the hands of the master class and to wield that power for themselves, the working class.

At that very moment the political structure will fall to the ground—the mills, mines, factories, etc., are only waiting seizure at the hands of an organised proletariat.

Do you claim the political power of the capitalist class, or lack of class consciousness of the workers prevents that new social order, namely, Socialism, from making its birth.

Yours for Socialism, H. DEAKIN.

**ANSWER.**

We do not pretend to prophesy as to the details of the future working class



organisations, but reasoning from past and present experience, it would seem that the greatest efficiency would be attained by forming one organisation for political work and another for economic work. These two organisations would be affiliated under some form, and where necessary would work together, until Socialism was established.

One organisation on the industrial field would *not* be on the basis of its class, unless the members understood their slave position and were deliberately working for their own emancipation, by organising for control of political power, in addition to being organised on the economic field for immediate purposes.

An "Industry" is that portion of the means of production, devised to produce a particular unit of wealth, or the carrying on of a unit of social service. Thus there is a "Coal Industry," a "Rubber Industry," etc., on one side, and a "Railway Industry," etc., on the other.

Modern capitalist control has spread far beyond these "Industrial" limits in many cases, and huge combines often control numerous "Industries." Lever Brothers, Burmantofts, and Vickers, Ltd., are notorious examples of this development. A more subtle form of control is that carried through on the financial side. Multi-millionaires often hold controlling blocks of shares in numerous industries, and direct the activities of these industries on a policy determined by their interests as a whole.

To give one illustration. The American Meat Trust not only own ranches and packing factories, but control dairies and farms, producing milk, eggs, cheese, butter, and various provisions. They also own a fleet of ships. In the event of a dispute with their seamen the Meat Trust could smash a strike by the simple expedient of ordering the shopkeepers to refuse to serve the strikers with either meat, bread or other provisions. Against such an attack the Seamen's Industrial Union would be utterly helpless. Hence, as the capitalist development has extended far beyond the "Industrial" basis, the workers' organisation must follow suit.

Mr. Deakin's statement that "All Socialists agree that the coming social revolution will do away with the State and all political institutions" is based upon the anarchist fallacy that the "State and all political institutions" are merely capitalist

devices to enslave the workers. As every student of history knows, when a society becomes established, and particularly when it is settled in a particular territory, it is necessary to frame rules for the organisation and management of the general affairs of society. These methods of general management form the political machinery of any society, and however the forms may change, it is obvious that they will be necessary as long as society exists. When the political organisation is furnished with force for the purpose of compelling obedience to the rules of society, it becomes a "State."

Socialism will be established when a majority of the working class use the franchise to wrest political power out of the hands of the capitalist class for that object. This will leave a minority either neutral or actively opposing the new order. Clearly, for a time at any rate, society will have to be prepared to use force, if necessary, to maintain the new system. As soon as the minority accept the system and work in co-operation with the majority, the need for any special force will have disappeared, and such force would be disbanded. Thus the "State" will "die out," but political organisation—as shown above—will be necessary and will therefore remain.

Mr. Deakin has failed to grasp the essential fact that the material conditions "responsible for the existence of all political institutions" is the necessity of organisation for a society to exist at all.

Our correspondent is also in error when he defines social production as "associated Labour." Production can only be termed social when the arrangements of society are formed for the purpose of assisting and carrying to a successful conclusion the interdependent and associated labour of masses of workers. It is interesting to note that while Mr. Deakin denies that the political powers can be used as "agents of emancipation," he claims that the "economic power" of the masters could be wrested from them and used by the workers. Here he contradicts himself. What he imagines to be the "economic power" is just as much the result of "material conditions" as the political institutions, and if the latter cannot be converted to the workers' use, neither, obviously, can the former.

But, as pointed out in various numbers of the **Socialist Standard**, this so-called "economic power" is another anarchist fallacy.

Without the backing of the political power, with its armed forces, the master class are bereft of any "power"—economic or other. To retain possession of the means of life, they are completely dependant upon the control of political power, which is placed in their hands by the working class who are ignorant of their own interests.

No organisation in the workshop can take possession of the means of production while the master class control political power and the armed forces. Any such attempt at control by the workers could be met, and completely crushed, by the machine gun, the explosive shell, and the aerial bomb. The mills, mines, factories, etc., can only be seized **after** the workers have gained political power with its control of the armed forces. Any other method merely leads the working class to the shambles.

Mr. Deakin's last question is on the lines of the old arithmetical "puzzle," i.e., if  $3 \times 2$  equals 6, which is the more necessary, the 3 or the 2, to produce the result of 6? The common sense answer, of course, is that both are **equally** necessary.

And similarly with Mr. Deakin's question. As the possession of political power by the master class is a result of the lack of class consciousness of the workers, it is clear that only with the growth of class consciousness—knowledge of their class position—will the political power be wrested from the hands of the masters.

Ed. Com.

### BE SELF-RELIANT!

What is called "unrest" amongst our fellow-workers is widespread to-day. It is often indefinite in form; it does not imply understanding of the roots of the trouble; but it is sufficiently in evidence to embarrass those in pulpit and press who would prefer to represent the nation as a united and happy family.

Workers are accustomed to toil; but now even the privilege of toiling is denied them for years at a time. They are familiar with the presence of people who are rich without working at all: they see nothing extraordinary in the fact of their masters enjoying different food, different clothes, different

houses, a higher culture than their own. But now when they are losing even the slight improvements in their condition which they have from time to time secured, acquiescence tends to disappear. More and more they long for relief, from whatever quarter they look for it.

But ask a worker what *he* is doing about it, and watch his look of surprise. Usually he is still looking for something to be done *for* him; and that is why he is continually disappointed. Governments go in and out of power: he gives his vote now to one party, now to the other, as either seems to promise more, and remains as before, miserable. Some of those whose business it is to write or speak what the masters wish to hear, have concluded that our class will never move beyond this stage of waiting to be saved. Every day from the Bench, the House of Commons, or the Press, comes some new insolence. A paragraph written in the "Outlook" last summer is a good example of its kind:

"Labour no longer even barks; it moans and bays the moon. It has lost faith in its programme, its ability and itself. . . . Direct action makes it shudder; the mere mention of political action reduces it to tears. It loves a phrase or a platitude, but it is too proud to fight, too tired to think, and too timid to speak."—(Quoted by "Evening Standard," 27/7/22.)

As regards the strike, which is what the writer appears to mean by direct action, the workers have used it, shudders notwithstanding, many times in the short space since those words were written. To mention only a few cases, we have had strikes of miners in Canada, U.S.A., and Belgium; a railway strike in Italy and one of rail shopmen in America; in France of metallurgical and textile workers, coalworkers, transport men, navvies and municipal workers of many grades; in Great Britain, jute-workers, woodworkers, furnishing tradesmen, miners, seamen and farm-workers, with the probability of several more big stoppages shortly, all bearing witness against the zealous journalist of the "Outlook." But since strikes can do little more than safeguard an already poor standard of life, we need not say more about them now. As regards any substantial change for the better, is it true that the workers have lost faith in their ability to achieve it? Can that be lost which they never had? "Faith," in our own powers, is only now growing strong amongst us. Numbers still prefer to trust



the employers, believing that their distress is due to an exceptional trade depression, which once past will not be repeated. The only question to them appears to be, which Capitalist party is taking the best means to surmount exceptional difficulties? Only another disillusionment is in store for them. The trade revival when it comes must be short, and every succeeding crisis more acute and protracted. Why? Because modern industry is so highly productive that it can meet and exceed the demand within a shorter time than ever before. The recurrence of crises could only be prevented by agreed restriction of production, which would be reflected in a monotonous condition of poverty for the workers in place of alternating periods of comparative comfort and acute distress.

To look then for help from any section of the masters is vain. They will only study ways and means to perpetuate production for sale. Do they not, moreover, deliberately use periods of unemployment to break the Trade Unions and strengthen their own position? Capitalist organisation of industry must be brought to an end.

With what purpose, then, will work be undertaken, if not for the manufacture of things for sale? It will be undertaken with one purpose—to supply us all with what we need. And who will make themselves responsible for doing it, since there will be no private profit when there is no sale? We, the workers, shall take it upon ourselves. We shall go to work as we do now, and every man and woman who wants to eat will do the same. Not quite willingly at first, perhaps. Not immediately will those who under Capitalism have known only joyless drudgery, nor yet those who have been parasites, find themselves able to co-operate freely and heartily with their fellows in useful work. These are results of centuries of social antagonisms. But they will gradually disappear. We shall decide for ourselves how the supply of the multitudinous necessary goods and services is to be carried out, how long it is necessary to work, who shall be our managers, and so on. And so long as any man discharges his part of the social work, he will be entitled to receive (by whatever means shall then seem convenient) what he requires from the common store. We shall carry through this revolution; but we shall have to do it together. It is not a job for a few men. A

few could not conquer the masters, and a few could not work a Socialist system of industry. Too timid? Too tired? We Socialists do not think so. You fought, fellow-workers, in your masters' war. You work (when you have the chance) as you never worked before. There is no lack of courage and industry. But you fight as you are told: you work as you are told. You spend your energy and pluck for the masters. When you realise what you have been doing so long, you will use them to set yourselves free.

The Socialist Party is the growing expression of the revolutionary purpose of the workers. Read its principles on the last page of this paper, and make them *your* principles. A.

### THE ONLY WAY.

"Surely you don't believe everything you read!" is a phrase often hurled at the Socialist when he uses some written evidence to support an argument. The answer is: "No, especially when it comes from the daily press!" But although newspaper reports must be accepted guardedly, yet confessions as to the iniquities of the present social order (which prove useful in the hands of the Socialist in the case against Capitalism) are made from time to time by the Capitalist press.

Is there ever an argument more frequently put forward against the practicability of the Socialist theory than the one of "lack of incentive?" Our comrade who debated at the Leyton Town Hall last March with Mr. A. E. Newbould, ex-Liberal M.P. for West Leyton, met with the same worn-out, exploded objection, viz.: That Socialism would destroy all incentive to work and invention. Of course, there was no difficulty in bringing evidence forward to smash the argument to smithereens. There never is, or was any trouble to FIND evidence as to the treatment meted out to the workers (inventors included) under Capitalism; the only drawback is that the evidence cannot be enumerated in the time or space available. In other words the answer's a book.

The question: "How would you compensate those with inventive genius under Socialism?" is usually asked with much concern, and, when the Socialist answers that each individual will give of his best to society, and receive in return the best

that society can produce, the anti-Socialist is not satisfied. Neither is the Socialist satisfied—until he has asked: "How are inventors treated under Capitalism?" This is where the evidence comes in, and this is where the daily press comes in, for out of their own mouths ye shall condemn them—or words to that effect. The *Daily News* (28/4/23) gives one more instance to add to the long list of starving inventors, who have found that mere brains don't stand an earthly when up against the all-powerful quid or the mighty dollar. We are informed by the *Daily News* correspondent that Joseph Tall, now an old man of 72:

"took out the first patent in this or any other country for a method of reinforcing concrete in order to render it suitable for building."

and that:

"The records at the Patent Office show that during the subsequent decade he added over a score more patents covering the whole field of concrete construction."

That's what Joseph Tall did. This is what he got:

"A few years before the Great War of 1914 the same Joseph Tall was tramping England in search of work. For five nights he slept out with the human wreckage on the Thames Embankment."

And this is why he got it:

"He struck me," continued the writer, "as the sort of man who would know, by instinct, as it were, all about machinery and materials, and nothing at all about finance." It is a common failing with inventors."

In other words, this man only had the "ability" to do useful work. He didn't know anything about the dirty, low-down tricks necessary to "get on." He didn't know that the owners of wealth don't intend to let any of that wealth slip from their grasp just because somebody else happens to have brains. He didn't know that the Capitalists weren't going to let him use their materials to work out his ideas, or interfere with their source of profit. Of course, he didn't; he was only an inventor! Again we read:

"All his patents were of no use without capital, and he had to fight the brick ring. By the time he was thirty his patents were beginning to lapse one after another."

All wealth, including the material which Joseph Tall wanted to work out his ideas with is owned by the Capitalist Class, and it is only with their consent that these materials can be used, no matter how marvellous may be the discoveries of the

specially talented. Joseph Tall's new introductions did not appeal to the brick ring, so the fact that he had patented his inventions did not matter. The Capitalists could afford to wait, and the patent rights would soon begin to expire. How simple! Talk about inventors going the usual way—THE ONLY WAY would be more correct.

WILKIE.

### THE WORKING-CLASS.

A gentleman more renowned for his wit than the science of his economic writings once said: "The working-class are a large body of people who are a nuisance, and they ought to be abolished"; a statement with which we are in agreement. To the uninitiated such a proposition may seem in the nature of a demand for the annihilation of that variously conceived mass of humanity, but their abolition properly understood no more implies such than the abolition of slavery meant the destruction of the slave: One of the methods generally employed by Capitalist apologists in endeavouring to confound potential thinkers among the workers is to refer to "various classes," "the public," "the nation," "manual and brain workers, etc., meaningless terms and imaginary divisions used to hide the ugly and awkward fact that by scientific generalisation we can separate modern society into two distinct and antagonistic sections, a large majority, and a small minority. Further examination and enquiry will furnish us with the facts from which we can establish the identity of these two sections as, Working-Class and Capitalist Class respectively: This step in the mental equipment of the worker forms the basis upon which all correct economic thought on modern society is erected. Let his conception of classes be unsound, and his reasoning becomes confused as a consequence: Who then are the Working-Class? appearances are deceptive. A labourer goes to work early clad in cap and corduroy, an architect follows later indistinguishable from one of the directors. The architect is termed skilled, but would cut a sorry shine and probably break his neck if he tried dock work; while the docker is wrongly assumed unskilled. One receives a day's pay, or a weekly wage; while the other draws his "salary." Imagine the signwriter trying to wipe a joint alongside



a plumber, or reverse the situation; contemplate a piano-tuner attempting to drive a taxi-cab the shortest route from Tottenham to Clapham Junction, and we see what an absurdity it is to attribute a monopoly of skill to any set or group of workers. What applies to these few instances is equally true of the millions from the lift boy to the manager, all are units with varying proportions of mental and physical energy, engaged in the social production and distribution of wealth. Of such then is the kingdom of the workers composed, different in many ways from an appearance point of view. We cannot classify them by dress, nor by mode of occupation, or by manner of remuneration, for there are daily, weekly, monthly, and other methods of payments of workers. In what respect is it then that we can put this apparently different mass of people into one class? When we have abstracted all their personal and minor peculiarities, what is it we have left common to them all, and yet is not common to the Capitalists as a class? All must work to live—but!—and here's the point, they cannot work until they have found a master who will purchase their particular mode of expending their mental and physical abilities. Why you ask must this multitude of men and women from the professional to the casual labourer spend their lives year out and year in in the pursuit of these tasks. They do not do it because they love work, the only colour they ever get usually begins where work ends; neither do they do it because it gives them an easy and pleasant life. Statistics of our industrial wreckage proves that. They do it because they are without property in the things that it is necessary to operate upon to produce wealth—the land, machinery, factories, warehouses, railways, etc.—all these things are the property of the small minority mentioned (the Capitalist Class), and the complex system of wealth production to-day requires all these various kinds of workers. All are equally important as cogs in the colossal machinery of modern production, they are the great majority (the Working-Class). As a class the masters do not work, the organising, supervising, etc., have become the specialised services of certain salaried workers, who when no longer wanted, or becoming unsuitable, "resign" instead of getting the "bullet." Why then are the workers poor and the idlers wealthy?

Because the wealth produced belongs to those who own the means of producing it. The producers only being returned sufficient on the average to prolong their lives as useful instruments for producing profit. The lesson of the last half century has been that an ever-increasing quantity of wealth can be produced with a relatively smaller number of workers. This applies to the distributive trades as well, shop assistants, travellers, etc., everywhere the gloomy prospect for the workers is the same, more jobbers than jobs, the haunting insecurity of the future. And yet need it be? Yes and No. Yes, if you are going to continue as contented menials, your conditions must get relatively worse; and no, if you will study your own class interests in their scientific aspect—Socialism. Then you will see clearly the underlying meaning of our jest, for to abolish the Working-Class is to end the slavish conditions of your present existence and establish the classless society, The Co-operative Commonwealth.

MAC.

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### ECONOMIC CLASS.

The Economic Class that has been carried on at Head Office finished on May 18th after a successful seven month's Work. It will recommence on the 20th September next.

All who desire to get a firm grip of Economics should bear this date in mind.

### THE SACRED "FAMILY HEARTH."

We are often met with the statement that the Socialist proposes to abolish the family and cut the sacred hearth tie. Those whose family relations, from the point of view of published morality, would not bear investigation fling the taunt that the Socialist is in favour of "free love" and no homes.

A very little investigation will show the emptiness of such statements.

The regular procession to the divorce courts and the legislation relating to illegitimate children, together with the frequent newspaper articles relating to sexual problems, bear witness to the fact that "free love," of a very sordid description, is already widespread at the present moment.

And what of the hearth tie? What is this sacred family life that the wicked Socialist would destroy?

An article in the *Manchester Guardian* (2/5/23) gives a little information on the point. It deals with a report on "Excessive Sickness in Dundee," prepared by the Executive Board of the General Federation of Trade Unions Approved Society.

From this article we learn that the percentage of married women in Dundee that are working is 41.4, or nearly half!

"Sir William Henderson, giving evidence before a sub-committee, said that in most confinement cases there was the difficulty of getting the women themselves to knock off work in time; they were loath to do it. It was also very difficult to check the resumption of work."

Sir William is not reported as giving the reason that made the women loath to knock off work. Yet the reason is simple. It is not because they are in love with work—it is because they and those that depend more or less upon them must have bread.

The articles states:

"Eleven women whom Miss Quaille visited had, between them, given birth to 78 children, 48 of whom were dead—a death rate of 62 per cent. 'One poor thing' had given birth to twelve children, all of whom were dead."

"These facts—and they are but an epitome of those which lie to the hand of every social investigator—reveal enough," the report states, "indeed too much for the sensitive soul, of what is happening, not only in Dundee, but in every centre where life has become unnaturally crowded and complex. Unholy greed and social shortsightedness, resulting in overworked and ill-nourished and ill-trained womanhood; little children, too, thousands of them, carelessly given transient existences—nothing for them but to

whimper out in misery too helplessly horrible for contemplation the attenuated span of life which congenital folly and post natal ignorance and criminality have allotted them."

What an appalling picture of life under Capitalism? Are these the sacred precincts the Socialist is taunted for attempting to invade?

Family life? What family life has the average modern wage-slave that he should fear its destruction? Working or looking for work through the hours of daylight—in a multitude of cases, both he, his wife, and often his children also. Home at night to a room or rooms that are only called home for appearance sake. In poverty and squalor they eat what the scantily furnished cupboard can provide, then sink into semi-torpor brought on by bad nourishment and excessive toil.

This state of affairs arises from the fact that the worker depends for his livelihood upon finding occupation the carrying on of which will provide profit for the owners of the means of production.

When the means of production are converted into the common property of all members of society, it will be possible for all to enjoy the fruits of labour without excessive toil under bad conditions. Then no one will depend for his existence upon the whim or the desire for profit of another. Men and women, freed from dependence upon property, will mate as mutual affection and mutual admiration dictate, and no property inspired laws will bind them to sordid, joyless lives.

GILMAC.

### NEW YORK.

Readers of THE SOCIALIST STANDARD interested in Socialist Educational Work may communicate with

Socialist Educational Society  
of New York,

127, University Place, New York City.

### PADDINGTON.

Persons interested in the formation of a Branch in the above neighbourhood should communicate with—

A. E. DAVIES,

23, Chilworth Mews, Paddington.



**SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****BRANCH DIRECTORY.**

**BATTERSEA.**—Communications to A. Jones, 3 Matthew-st., Letchmere Estate, Battersea, S.W. Branch meets Mondays, 8.30, at 16 Creek-st., York-rd.

**BIRMINGHAM.**—Communications to L. Vinetsky, 11 Upper Dean-st., Birmingham. Branch meets A.E.U. Institute, Spiceal-st., every Saturday.

**CENTRAL.**—Membership obtained only through the Ex. Committee. Applications to General Sec.

**DEPTFORD.**—Sec., J. Veasey, 24, Marlton-st., E. Greenwich, S.E. 10. Branch meets 1st and 3rd Wednesdays in month, at 8 o'clock, at 435, New Cross-rd., S.E. Discussion after Branch business. Public invited.

**EAST LONDON.**—Communications to A. Jacobs, Sec., 78 Eric-st., Mile-end, E.3. Branch meets first and third Mondays in month at 141 Bow-rd.

**EDINBURGH.**—Communications to Andrew Porter, 12a, Kings-rd., Portobello.

**HACKNEY.**—Communications to the Sec., 78 Greenwood-rd., E.8. Branch meets Fridays, 7.30, at The Arcadians, 42, Amburst-rd., Hackney Stn.

**HANLEY.**—Branch meets Mondays, Working Men's Club, Glass-st. Communications to Sec., T. Travis, 27, Arthur Street, Cobridge, Staffs.

**ISLINGTON.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8.30, at 144 Seven Sisters-rd., Holloway, N. Communications to W. Baker, 35 Alma-st., Kentish Town, N.W.

**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.**—Communications to Sec., J. Bird, 5 Wellington-avenue, Westcliffe-on-Sea.

**TOOTING.**—Communications to Sec., 3, Lyveden-rd., Tooting, S.W.17. Branch meets Fridays, at Parochial Hall, Church-lane, Tooting, at 8 p.m.

**TOTTENHAM.**—Sec., G. Boyden, 11, Somerset road, Upper Edmonton. Branch meets Fridays, The Trades Hall, 7, Bruce-grove, Tottenham. Discussion after branch business. Public invited.

**WALTHAMSTOW.**—Communications to A. J. Godfrey, 30, Waverley road, Walthamstow, E.17. Branch meets at Workmen's Hall, High-st., every Monday.

**WATFORD.**—A. Lawson, Sec., 107 Kensington-avenue, Watford.

**WEST HAM.**—Branch meets Thursdays at 8 p.m. at 167 Romford rd., Stratford. Communications to P. Hallard, 22 Colegrave-rd., Stratford, E.

**WOOD GREEN.**—Branch meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month at 8 p.m., at Alexandra School, N.22.

**S.P.G.B. PROPAGANDA MEETINGS****LONDON DISTRICT.****Sundays:**

Finsbury Park, 6 p.m.  
Clapham Common, 6 p.m.  
Tottenham, West Green Corner, 7.30 p.m.  
Victoria Park, 8.30 p.m.  
Walthamstow, Church Hill, 7.30 p.m.

**Mondays:**

Highbury Corner, 8.30 p.m.

**Thursdays:**

Dalston, Queen's Road, 8.30 p.m.

**Saturdays:**

Edmonton, The Green, 8 p.m.

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**THE SOCIALIST PARTY  
OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.



# THE Socialist Standard

The Official Organ of **THE SOCIALIST PARTY** of Great Britain.

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[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.]

## THE SOCIALIST IDEAL.

The Socialist is accustomed to being accused, alternately, of being an "impractical idealist" and a "gross and sordid materialist," often by the same person in almost the same breath. What truth is there in these contradictory charges? Let us see!

The Socialist proposes a fundamental change in the social order. He desires to realise a state of affairs at present existing only as a general idea in his mind. He denies that Capitalism is the final achievement of the human race. Undoubtedly, then, he possesses an ideal, a hope to strive for. But does this make him an idealist, and an impractical one at that?

When a man, feeling hungry, conceives a desire for his dinner, no one thinks of him as a hero, although men have, from time to time, performed deeds of valour, and even given up life in the quest of that same dinner. Similarly, when a group of men set about building a house, or a battleship, they interfere with "nature," upset the existing state of affairs in the particular sphere in which they are engaged in order to change "the actual," and realise an idea. Yet, time was when houses and battleships were beyond the range of human thought. Are they then miracles? By no means: Men, in the struggle for life, have increased their knowledge of their material environment and, consequently, their capacity to change it.

The realisation of the Socialist ideal does not demand the operation of any unknown or supernatural force. On the one hand, we have the workers capable of producing all the desirable objects of human existence; on the other, the means whereby they can

do so, the land and the machines, the latter the product of labour. The Socialist proposes that these two indispensable factors of social life, the workers and the instruments of labour, shall become united legally, as they are industrially. That is to say, that just as the workers operate the instruments in question, so they shall also own them, in common for the common good.

In this proposal there is no suggestion that material things should be forgotten. On the contrary, they are held to be of supreme importance. The Socialist trusts to no divine illumination, nor miraculous "change of heart." He sees the wants of his fellow-workers, and he sees abundant means for their satisfaction. What is there superhuman about bringing them together?

Let us consider the obstacles. To commence with, the land and the machines are at present the property of a small class of people. By reason of this fact, this class is in a position to enjoy the fruits of social labour without taking part in the process. A natural desire to continue the habits of congenital laziness so fostered is sufficient to induce this class to resist any change in the distribution of property in the means whereby they live. For the purpose of making as effective a resistance as possible, this class has developed and entrenched itself behind the machine known as the State, which directs and controls certain unanswerable arguments in favour of things as they are in the shape of guns, ammunition, etc., plus the human and mechanical means of using the same. This is the principal active obstacle.



In addition, there exists the passivity of the workers, their failure to grasp the cause, nay, even the fact, of their enslavement. This second obstacle, negative though it may appear, is even more important than the first. Were it not for the acquiescence of the workers the master class would be destitute of slaves to do their bidding in the fields and factories, at the ballot-box, or behind the guns. The initial task of the Socialist, therefore, is to arouse the workers, to inspire them with revolutionary discontent, and to provide them with a clear understanding of the facts of their position. Herein is recognised the real and practical importance of the idea.

The capitalist objector to Socialism sees in this the degradation of the idea. Nothing suits him better than to keep matter and mind, fact and thought, in water-tight compartments. Let the workers keep their minds on a God who is intangible, or on boxers or horses, whom they rarely, if ever see, on anything, in fact, but the "gross and sordid" economic world which matters so much. Let them fill their heads with notions of brotherly love for their masters, and of hatred for imaginary enemies beyond the seas. Let them put their feet in the clouds and stand on their heads. That is the capitalist idea of "practical idealism!"

The Socialist does not shrink from the charge of materialism; but to him there is no necessity to separate mind from matter. He recognises no metaphysical distinctions and antagonisms between the subjective and objective aspects of reality. He regards mental processes as essentially part of the general process of human life, inextricably bound-up with its environment and sharing the same material composition. There is one world only, not two.

The Socialist, therefore, applies his mind to the solution of the material problems around him, viz., want in the midst of plenty, wealth for the idlers, and misery for the toilers. The terms "gross and sordid" apply, not to the man who appreciates and revolts against the existing system, but to the system itself. The idealist seeks to give us "beautiful ideas." The ugly facts are left to take care of themselves. The Socialist, however, proclaims the necessity, not merely for thought,

but action. The system must be changed, and we the workers must change it!

How? By the removal of the obstacles. By removing the capitalist class from control: first, of the political machine, the State; secondly, of the means of wealth production.

And the outcome of the change? Just imagine, fellow-workers, if you can, yourselves in possession of the earth and the giant instruments of labour, which you and the rest of your class have produced! Would you toil till you had exhausted your energy in order that the few might run riot in luxury; while you pinched and scraped and made shift with insufficient food, shoddy clothes, ugly and cramped houses, and no leisure to speak of in which to enjoy the fruits of your toil? Would you rest content in ignorance of the universe around you chock-full as it is of interest and fascination for the human mind? Would you support the lackeys of oppression and superstition, the lawyer-politicians and the parsons? Would you, free men and women, leave it to them to legalise and sanctify your loves, or to punish and condemn you for your hates? Nay! would you not rather rise at last to some approach to human dignity? Would you not lay claim to the heritage to which you now in vain aspire—health, enlightenment and happiness?

Fellow-workers, the road is clear if you would but open your eyes and look! If you would but use the same energy and intelligence in your own interest that you waste in the service of those who abuse, exhaust and poison your bodies, and starve and ridicule your minds. Can you not display the same enthusiasm for your own needs and desires as you do for those of the class which despises and humiliates you?

These masters! these "educated people!" what have they done for you? You, who plough and sow, quarry and mine, build and lay tracks, spin and weave! What have they done, these your "superiors," with the wealth and power which you in your ignorance have placed and left in their hands? The rude vigour of your ancestors is gone; disease, insidious and relentless, stalks unchecked among you. The machine "saves labour" by taking the bread from your mouths.

## THE SOCIALIST PARTY AND TRADE UNIONS.

A considerable amount of confusion exists in the minds of certain of our critics regarding our attitude towards Trade Unions. It is said by some that we are opposed to the Trade Unions, and in fact to any action by the workers on the economic field. Others assert that our position on the question is inconsistent with the general position of a Socialist Party. With regard to those who assert that we are opposed to the workers taking action against the master class on the economic field, we need only refer to our manifesto, in which we outline our position on the question, to show that the critics referred to are unacquainted with the facts. On pages 17 and 18 of the manifesto we state:—

"The workers' organisation, political and economic, must be upon the basis of their class with the object of ending the capitalist system and establishing the Socialist Commonwealth. Any efforts on their part to resist the encroachments of the master class deserve our sympathy and support. But whilst encouraging this resistance, we should fail in our duty did we not point out to the resisters the limits of their power."

Again on page 33, after giving a brief sketch of the rise of Trade Unions, we state:—

"The basis of the action of the trade unions must be a clear recognition of the position of the workers under capitalism, and the class struggle necessarily arising therefrom; in other words they must adopt the Socialist position, if they are going to justify their existence at all. Does this mean that the existing unions are to be smashed? That will depend upon the unions themselves. All action of the unions in support of capitalism, or tending to side-track the workers from the only path that can lead to their emancipation should be strongly opposed, but on the other hand, trade unions being a necessity under capitalism, any action on their part upon sound lines should be heartily supported."

The position embodied in these quotations has been consistently maintained by us since the formation of our organisation. Whenever the workers have taken action on the economic field, either by way of attempting to increase wages, or resist their reduction, we have not hesitated to support their action. True, we have denounced the Trade Union leaders when they, contrary to the wishes and interests of the workers, have entered into compromises with the master class. True, we have exposed the absurd ideas of many of these leaders concerning the so-called identity of interests between capital and labour. It is also true

Is there a family among you that escaped paying some toll in the four years' carnage so readily forgotten and forgiven?

Yet, it only needs good food, fresh air and rational enjoyment to cure disease! It only needs organisation to apportion the world's work equitably, and a selfish, simultaneously, drudgery and idleness! Mutual understanding on the part of the workers of the world is all that is necessary to banish war and the fear of war!

But the task has been too much for your masters. These "captains of industry," self-styled, have failed to wring life from nature for you. Is it too much, fellow-workers, to do it for yourselves?

E. B.

## WHY WORK?

'Tis said the Capitalists are grown miserly. They want to cut down wages still more. Some there are, of wicked intent, who would blame the Capitalist and accuse him of evil designs. But this is surely not true. Have they not pointed out to us again and again that they even employ us at a loss to themselves, so anxious are they that we should not suffer unnecessary want?

But lo! What is this I have before me? Why, the report of the impending ruin of J. Lyons & Co., Ltd.! It is contained in the following record of their business:

"During the last six years the profits have expanded by 100 per cent., and since the war the aggregate profits have amounted to £3,881,279, while the dividends on the ordinary shares have totalled 370 per cent., allowing for the 100 per cent. share bonus distributed two years ago."—"Daily News," June 7th, 1923.)

You thriftless worker! If you had only saved a paltry £1,000 out of your enormous wages, and invested it in Lyons' shares six years ago, you need not have lost a bead of sweat working, and yet you would have drawn £3,700 out of the company and still have your £1,000 invested in Lyons' shares. Marvellous! isn't it? And you are the dupe who produces the marvel.

GILMAC.

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that we have criticised the great bulk of the Trade Unionists, who, whilst they are prepared to strike against their masters, at every election vote their masters or their representatives into political power. But all this in no way alters the fact that whenever the workers have attempted to resist the encroachments of capital, the position of the Socialist Party has been one of supporting them. Now comes the other kind of critic and declares that all this is inconsistent with the true Socialist position. As to how it is inconsistent is a question which brings forth many answers, which are so varied that it is impossible, within the scope of an article, to deal with all the points raised.

It will be sufficient if we deal with the position in general to show that the alleged inconsistency exists only in the imagination of the critics.

Under capitalism the worker enters what is called the labour market to sell his labour power as an article of merchandise. The capitalist and the worker face each other in the market as buyer and seller. To the capitalist the reason why the worker is in the labour market is of no importance; he only regards the labour market as a branch of the general market in which commodities are bought and sold. In such conditions the worker loses the identity of Smith, Jones, or Robinson; he is to the capitalist so much energy which can be set in motion for a profitable purpose. But the reason why the capitalist is there is likewise of no importance to the worker; his concern is to obtain the wherewithal to live, and since he can only obtain this by the sale of his labour power, he must enter into relations with the capitalist concerning the price he is to receive. It goes without saying that the worker will endeavour to obtain the highest price he can get, whilst the capitalist will endeavour to beat down the price as low as possible.

We have said that the price of labour power is subject to the operation of economic laws, but this does not mean that the price of labour power is determined apart from the struggle between the buyers and sellers. On the contrary it is through the struggle that the price corresponding to the value of labour power is ultimately realised. To realise the value of the commodity labour power necessitates the highest resistance between the buyers and sellers. Of course, the dice are loaded in favour of the capi-

talist, as he is in possession of the means of living, whilst the worker has nothing but his power to labour. Hence the resistance of the worker can only take the form of withholding the supply of his energy, and as in this form of resistance the individual worker is helpless, some form of combination is necessary. The form of combination which meets this requirement to-day is the Trade Union. A Trade Union is as a rule an organisation composed of a number of workers engaged in the same trade or occupation. For instance, there is the National Union of Clerks, the National Union of Railwaymen, the National Furnishing Trades Association, the names of which indicate the fact that the basis of membership in the Trade Union is one of trade or occupation. Therefore the Trade Union is an economic organisation. It is true that many of the unions dabble in politics, but this is merely a side line, as an examination of their political and their economic activities will show. The amount of money expended by the unions on activities of a purely economic character is far in excess of the amount expended upon political activities, and there is the further point that when the individual worker is called upon to become a member of the union, the question of his political views does not arise at all. Liberal, Tory, Labour, Socialist, or no political view at all, the worker is enrolled as a member of the Trade Union for reasons which are purely economic. The Trade Union, then, is the form of combination by which the workers carry on their resistance against the capitalist, and however one may regret that the activities of the workers are not directed to the establishment of Socialism, the struggle on the economic field must be carried on. For, bad as the condition of the working class is, only a fool would deny that it could be far worse. Of course it will be said that the tendency of capitalist development is to drive down the position of the working class. But as Marx puts the position—

"Such being the tendency of things in this system, is this saying that the working class ought to renounce their resistance against the encroachments of capital, and abandon their attempts at making the best of the occasional chances for their temporary improvement? If they did, they would be degraded to one level mass of broken wretches past salvation. I think I have shown that their struggles for the standard of wages are incidents inseparable from the whole wages system, that in 99 cases out of 100 their efforts at raising wages are only efforts at maintaining the given value of labour, and that the

necessity of debating their price with the capitalist is inherent to their condition of having to sell themselves as commodities. By cowardly giving way in their everyday conflict with capital, they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiating of any larger movement."—"Value, Price, and Profit.")

Let there be no mistake about it, from the standpoint of the Socialist the struggle on the economic field to obtain and maintain the best terms the workers can get for the sale of their labour power is necessary. Far from there being any inconsistency on our part on this point, it is quite in line with the position of a Socialist Party. Right up to the time when the workers are ready to take over the control of the means of wealth production and distribution, the struggle of the workers over wages, hours, and the general conditions of employment, will have to be made, even as the workers become Socialists in larger and larger numbers. The duty of the Socialist is to make the non-Socialist worker, inside and outside the Trade Union, acquainted with the actual position of the working class in capitalist society. For the workers to continue their struggle on the economic field, whilst in ignorance of the fact that they are slaves to the capitalist class, is to prolong the system by which they are sufferers. The adverse conditions in which the workers find themselves are inseparable from the capitalist system, and can only be removed when the workers awaken to a recognition of the necessity for the removal of the system, and the establishment of the Socialist form of society. Whether wages be called high or low the general position of the workers is one of a struggle against starvation throughout the whole of their lifetime. Trade Unionism will not alter this, nor, in fact, will any form of economic organisation. The abolition of the wages system and the conditions that are engendered in that system, will only become an accomplished fact when a majority of the workers become acquainted with a knowledge of their slave position, and then organising politically and economically for the overthrow of capitalist society and the establishment of Socialism.

R. REYNOLDS.

#### ERRATA.

Will readers please note that there is still only one working class in spite of the printer's attempt to multiply, as per June "S.S." page 343, col. 2, line 7.

#### PROGRESS AND POLITICS.

By Ramsey Muir. Methuen & Co., 36, Essex Street, W. C.2. Price 3s. 6d.

The dust cover advertises this book "as an attempt to survey the whole field of politics from the standpoint of a progressive who is deeply dissatisfied with many aspects of the existing order, but who is convinced that the Socialist scheme of reconstruction is no better than a will o' the wisp."

After reading the book we can share the author's conviction concerning what he calls "the Socialist scheme of reconstruction," for throughout "Socialist" is used to denote the Labour Party, and for the workers the schemes of that party, like the schemes of the Liberal Party, are will o' the wisps.

We have no space here to quarrel over the meaning of words, but to apply the term Socialist to the Labour Party is unfair both to responsible Socialists and to the Labour Party. The Labour Party is not, and never has been, a Socialist Party. Even its own publicists admit that, as witness Mr. Snowden's statement that

"the British Labour Party is certainly not Socialist in the sense in which Socialism is understood upon the Continent. It is not based upon the recognition of the class struggle."—(Page, 528, "Manchester Guardian" Reconstruction Number, 26th October, 1922.)

And so, while Mr. Muir is convinced of the futility of Labourism, he says nothing about Socialism, and it is therefore impossible to know whether he has any convictions on this subject.

But more of this anon; for the present the book itself provides ample scope for comment. It can be divided into three sections, dealing with (1) the broad aims of Liberalism, (2) the achievements of Liberalism in the past, and (3) the Liberal solution of immediate problems.

To take the last first.

It proposes as a solution of modern financial problems, increased death duties (the capital levy is discussed and turned down), the League of Nations as a means to abolish war, and a re-organisation of industry and an improved dole system to solve the present unemployment problem.

The capital levy and death duties are no concern of the workers. The incidence of taxes falls on the people who can pay them, not on the propertyless class. Financial problems are therefore problems for the master class, who will have to solve them



unless the workers do so by ending the system which engenders them.

As for the League of Nations, only a Liberal can imagine that it will prevent wars. They have their basis in the economic structure of society itself, and result from the struggle for markets under competitive production. And although the workers allow themselves to be used as cannon fodder, they are all the time only fighting their masters' battles while neglecting their own. The futility of expecting to end war under capitalism by peaceful negotiation is shown with naïve clearness by our author himself on page 89, where he writes:

"It was by the use of the Concert of Europe that Sir Edward Grey succeeded in averting the almost annual threats of war by which Europe was disturbed during the years 1906 to 1914, and he could have succeeded in averting the final menace of 1914 by the same means if Germany had only permitted the concert of Europe to come into being." Moreover, somebody will be doing things like this again, for Mr. Muir is not going to trust a pacific League of Nations with an army,

"for the commander of such an army would have in his hands the means of making himself the despot of the world."

The League of Nations is to be bossed, not boss, you understand!

And then unemployment. As this did not arrive with the war, but was quite a flourishing problem which should have appealed to Liberals of the past prior to 1914, and as "it is a problem of manageable dimensions capable of a reasonable and just solution" (page 133), it is strange that it was not solved by one of the many Liberal Governments the workers have chosen for themselves. But, there, even Liberals cannot do everything at once, and while the House of Lords needed reforming, what time had they to deal with a problem like unemployment, which was soluble and would therefore present no difficulty? The solution is Government relief work, and insurance by industries. Of course,

"there would remain a large group of industries which could not be directly helped by this method; the textile trades, for example. In these industries the only way of minimising—for that is all that is possible—the evils of a period of exceptional trade depression would be a system of organised relay work with partial unemployment relief."—(Page 136.)

As Mr. Ramsey Muir does not know, or at least does not say, how periods of "exceptional trade depression" can be avoided, this is an admission of blank failure and

shows that even Liberalism of the pinkest hue will not give the workers that security of which Mr. Muir prates.

So much for the future Liberalism. What of the past?

In his outline of past achievements, our author is continually compelled to confess that Conservatives shared in the so-called reforms of the nineteenth century. Thus we get frequent passages like these:

"This Act (giving the counties representative councils) of 1888, though it had been drafted by a Liberal statesman, was actually carried by a Conservative Government."—(Page 94.)

"A Liberal Act of 1871 saved the unions from this danger (of prosecutions for conspiracy in restraint of trade), though it had to be supplemented by a Conservative Act in 1875."—(Page 95.)

"In the early days, a great Tory philanthropist, Lord Shaftesbury, was one of the most persistent advocates of factory legislation, which always had Liberal majorities."—(Page 100.)

"Conservative Ministries and Parliaments contributed from time to time to the work."—(Page 101.)

From this it is seen that if the worker had cause to be grateful for these reforms, if they mitigated the evils of his slave condition, his gratitude must be showered on Liberalism and Conservatism alike. Such reforms have not fundamentally altered the position of the working class, however, and no gratitude is needed. And if Factory Acts and the abolition of slavery are achievements to be referred to with pride, does Mr. Muir forget that the Liberals like Cobden, so energetic in freeing slaves, were equally energetic in opposing Factory Acts? And in spite of capitalist historians, was the emancipation of slaves so disinterested and high-minded as Mr. Muir would have us believe? The Act liberating slaves was passed in 1832. David Hume had already pointed out in 1741 that

"from the experience of planters, slavery is as little advantageous to the master as to the slave, wherever hired servants can be procured. A man is obliged to clothe and feed his slave and he does no more for his servant. The price of the first purchase, therefore, is so much loss to him, not to mention that the fear of punishment will never draw so much labour from a slave as the dread of being turned off and not getting another service will from a free man."

And in Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations" occurs this passage:

"Though the wear and tear of a free servant be equally at the expense of his master, it generally costs him much less than that of a slave."

The liberation of slaves was as charitable

and disinterested as is the sending of "armies of missionaries whom Britain maintained" into every land, which our author claims to be characteristic of a new policy of Liberalism (*vide* page 92).

"The purpose of the Missions is not to develop trade, but trade is inevitably developed by missions. They steadily increase material needs: soaps, oils, cloths, sewing machines, books, tools, follow hard on Mission enterprise. Missions teach thrift, industry and honesty in commercial dealings. It is worth while for business men to support Missions if from no other motive than that they create new, larger and better markets for their goods."—(Record of the Home and Foreign Mission work of the United Free Church of Scotland, December, 1919, page 267.)

These are a few of the past achievements of Liberalism which Mr. Muir rakes up. There are some he has forgotten. What of Mr. Asquith sending soldiers to Featherstone in 1893, when the miners were shot down, and Churchill's calling out of troops at the time of the Dock Strike in 1911, when, by mistake, of course, Mr. Tillett told the dockers to rush the bakers' shops? For an author who chides Labour orators with trusting to the ignorance of their hearers (page 86), this is a serious omission. And how does he square this use of force with the statement that the Conservative is distinguished from the Liberal by

"the use of force rather than persuasion as the easiest weapon for dealing with any sign of revolt against the established order."—(Page 9.)

The use of force as a protection to the master class is another honour shared equally by these two parties, and with the advent of a Labour Government there will arise a third participator.

Force is the foundation of capitalist domination, and that force is obtained through Parliament; capitalist control there means capitalist control everywhere. The workers therefore have nothing to gain by supporting any party which seeks to maintain that control. Concessions and reliefs may have been granted in the past by both parties, but none of these concessions, none of these vaunted reliefs, such as Old Age Pensions, State Insurance, etc., have altered the general position of the workers in society. They are still slaves, and whilst Liberalism, Conservatism, or Labourism has their attention they will remain slaves. Mr. Muir admits that

"Liberalism and Conservatism are united in their belief that private enterprise must, in the future as in the past, provide the main driving force in the economic sphere."—(Page 7.)

And that statement damns Liberalism for

the workers, to whom the only problem of vital importance is the problem of ownership and control of the means of life. The ending of private ownership solves the problem of the division of the product of industry, in which Liberalism promises the workers a larger but still a small share. The object of the workers should be to dispossess the master class. They therefore have no use for any party which denies the class struggle. For the achievement of their emancipation the Liberal Party is as useless as the Conservative or Labour Parties. The workers alone can free themselves from the burden of their condition—this they can do when they wish by organising on a class basis.

W. J. R.

### THE STAGING OF ANOTHER PANTOMIME.

"Internationals" are having a great run these days. A new one has recently come into existence at Hamburg, and from the "Daily News" (25/5/23) we learn that:

"The objects are defined with sufficient breadth to enable the parties within a fairly wide range of differences of view to adopt it."

These periodical bursts of enthusiasm for internationals would be amusing if their consequences were not so harmful in keeping the workers' minds occupied with other than the position that really concerns them.

This particular International is so broad in its views that it throws overboard one of the fundamental principles of Socialism—the class struggle.

"This phrase, 'class war,' appeared in the German and French translations, but the English translation substituted in its place these words: 'to foster the independent and industrial action of the workers' organisations as a means of realising that object.'"

"Other members of the committee finally expressed a preference for this rendering, and this was adopted."

It will be seen, therefore, that they do not propose anything drastic, but something quite respectable as befits those who are expecting soon to be called upon "to govern." They do not intend to prosecute the class struggle, but only to "foster" independent action! Need we add that Ramsay MacDonald, J. H. Thomas, and Arthur Henderson are on the Executive Committee of this body?

GILMAC.



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**CO-OPERATION—A HOPELESS EXPERIMENT.**

There are many who believe that the Co-operative movement will provide an easy and painless means of transforming present competitive production into production upon a basis of common property. There are others who oppose the Co-operative movement on the ground that it is Socialist. Those who advance these views have not given sufficient consideration to fundamental matters.

The means of production to-day are in the hands of a small but tremendously wealthy class; a class that is powerful because it controls the State machinery. The means of production are operated by a large but poverty-stricken class of wage workers; a class that is in slavery because it leaves the State machinery in the hands of its oppressors.

Production is on a gigantic scale, based upon sale for profit. The increase in quantity and complexity of the machinery used makes necessary ever less and less workers to turn out the things required by society. The big capitalists undersell the small, and eventually drive increasing numbers of the latter out of business. Only a short time ago the Small Traders' Association was complaining bitterly that their members were being rapidly wiped out of trade. In

fact, the small traders are becoming little more than salesmen for the powerful trusts.

Assuming the continuance of present production for sale, the large capitalists can only be driven out of business by a still larger type. Any organisation that is going to offer serious opposition to the present owners of wealth must have an enormous capital at its disposal. Imagine the size of capital an organisation would require to compete successfully with, say, the Steel, Oil, or Meat Trusts, or similar gigantic corporations! Further, such an organisation to live and flourish would have to adopt the same methods as its competitors—exploit its workers.

Over a hundred years ago Robert Owen conceived the idea of organising a new society in the midst of the old. He thought the workers could band themselves together into producing and distributing groups, spread over the whole of society, and eventually freeze the capitalist out. Subsequently he had to modify his ideas somewhat, owing to the strength of the opposition, and tried experiments by establishing co-operative colonies on comparatively virgin soil—but, of course, with people brought up in capitalist surroundings. These experiments all ended in disaster; they ultimately ruined him and demonstrated the futility of attempting to found ideal societies in a capitalist world.

There was an excuse for the dreams of the heroic and good-intentioned Owen. In his time knowledge of the organisation and development of society was comparatively small; and he was one of those by whose disastrous experiments later generations were to acquire a sound understanding. Since his time social investigators have piled up literally mountains of information showing how one form of society grows out of another, owing to the operation of forces that already exist in the old society; and that a new society is never grafted on to the old, as it were, from the outside.

In Owen's day the capital required to start an important industry was but a tiny fraction of what is required to-day; and the power that lies in the hands of those controlling the State was not yet sufficiently realised by the oppressed class or its would-be deliverers. The powerful capitalists have it in their hands to smash to pieces, whenever they wish, any rising productive or distributing organisation that challenges their exist-

tence, long before such an organisation could reach any serious proportions. The very fact that they make no serious effort to interfere with the development of the various Co-operative Societies shows that they expect no dangerous opposition from these societies.

In his "History of Co-operation," the late G. J. Holyoake, one of the best-known advocates of Co-operation, defined it as follows:

"The equality sought is not the mad equality of equal division of unequal earnings, but that just award of gains which is proportionate to work executed, to capital subscribed, or custom given. . . . and there is equality in a co-operative society, when the right of every worker is recognised to a share of the common gain in the proportion to which he contributes to it, in capital, or labour, or trade—by hand or head; and this is the only equality which is meant, and there is no complete or successful co-operation where this is not conferred, aimed at, and secured."—(Vol. I., page 4.)

From this it will be seen that he who subscribes most capital will gain most; in other words, those who "have not," who are the ones that most require aid, will remain as they were before—without. Inequality in the means of living, and hence private property, is at the root of the Co-operative movement—that is, the very opposite to Socialism.

On page 5 of the same volume the author states:

"It touches no man's fortune; it seeks no plunder; it causes no disturbance in society; it gives no trouble to statesmen."

Here the death knell of Co-operation is sounded, from the point of view of any advantage it offers to the workers. If those who own the means of production are not to have their fortunes touched, from whence are to come the productive powers of tomorrow? If there is to be no disturbance in society, then the slaves are to remain as they are—slaves. If it is to give no trouble to statesmen, then the capitalist can rest content that, so far as the Co-operative movement is concerned, the parasite will be kept for ever.

At present the mass of the people obtain, on the average, barely sufficient to keep themselves and their families from starvation; consequently they have no appreciable sum to invest in Co-operative shares. Their wages are so small that as a general rule they must buy in the cheapest market. The wealthy Trusts have demonstrated again and

again that, when necessary, they can undersell and bankrupt their smaller opponents.

The Co-operative concern can only flourish by adopting up-to-date methods, employing as few as possible workers to obtain a given output. If, therefore, we were to assume a growth of the Co-operative concerns to an important size it would mean a parallel growth of unemployment. There would be less who could buy shares and more who wanted bread. The problem facing the workers of obtaining the wherewithal to live would be intensified instead of being abolished.

The soundness of this position is borne out by the history of the Co-operative movement. It has adopted capitalist methods and exhibits capitalist evils. At the moment of writing, 15,000 employees of the Co-operative Wholesale Society are out on strike against a reduction in wages. ("Daily News," 11/6/23).

Co-operation offers no easy road to emancipation. Those who support the movement, such as the Communist Party and the Labour Party, are inviting the workers into that alley where they become temporarily disillusioned and apathetic.

The abolition of wage slavery necessitates recognition of the fact that the workers are robbed of the wealth they produce; that the capitalists are the robbers; that the workers can produce for their own consumption more easily than for an idle class; that the robbery can only be prevented by the producing class owning the wealth it produces; that such ownership can only be attained by taking from the capitalists the control of the political machinery and converting private ownership into social ownership.

The new society will therefore grow out of the old and not be imposed upon it. All that is valuable in the old society will be retained, and all that is harmful will be abolished. The central idea of present production—profit, with its basis private property—will give place to production for use on the basis of common property.

GILMAC.

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### DON QUIXOTE !

The debate which took place in the House of Commons on March 20th, described by the daily papers as a Socialist debate, was a sheer farce. Those who moved and supported the so-called Socialist resolution never laid down the Socialist position; nor did Sir A. Mond deal with a single Socialist principle.

The resolution moved by Philip Snowden was dealt with in the April issue of the S.S., but some of the points raised in the discussion are worthy of notice, as they go far to prove the falsity of the position taken up by the Labour Party and the inability of Capitalist politicians to meet Socialist arguments.

In his remarks, Philip Snowden used a statement quite common with Labour leaders: "The Capitalist system is passing away." A Conservative member retorted with the question: "Then why worry?" Obviously if Capitalism is passing away, the policy for the Socialist is to let it pass. In any case the Labour Party is not helping it to pass. Their policy is to beg and demand reforms to patch up the system and prolong it, and incidentally to confuse the workers by leading them to expect material alteration from reforms.

According to the newspaper report, Philip Snowden "disavowed confiscation and revolution." Most Labour leaders do the same, but none of them show how it is possible to pass from a system of society where the means of life are owned by a ruling class to one where they are owned in common, without revolution. Labour leaders everywhere repudiate confiscation and in doing so state their agreement with the present system, where the wealth produced by the working-class is confiscated to the use of the Capitalist class, but must not be "confiscated" back by the workers to their own uses.

On a level with the above was the comment in the "Daily Chronicle" (21/3/23) that Philip Snowden "has always, since he entered public life, been an evolutionary Socialist; and only the ignorant have ever attributed to him any belief in violence." It is only the ignorant who use such phrases. A man can only be a Socialist when he realises the need for revolution. Evolution only brings nearer the time when revolution is absolutely necessary: It can-

not effect the change. Socialism can only be established through revolution, consequently, the Socialist has no use for adjectives to qualify his Socialism. Being a Socialist, he works for revolution by educating his fellow-workers in Socialist knowledge. He tells them, among other things, the truth about violence. Under Capitalism the workers are kept in subjection by violence, or the threat of violence, in the last resort; and they cannot hope to throw off the yoke of wage-slavery until they are in a position to use violence successfully against those who enslave them. They can only do this when they control the fighting forces through Parliament. Violence, when necessary, is the method of the capitalist class; if necessary it will have to be the method of the working-class, when they have the power.

The most damaging part of the debate, perhaps, was the controversy as to the true position of the Labour Party. Sir Alfred said that at the last election nothing was resented more by most Labour members than to be accused of being not a Labour but a Socialist Party. The reply from the Labour benches was: "We are the Labour Party. It is the same thing." Sir Alfred replied:

"It is not the same thing. The hon. Member for Colne Valley knows it perfectly well, and so do other hon. Members, or they would not get so excited. I am extremely glad the mask is off at last. It is a clean issue between individualism and Socialism, a clean issue of private ownership against national ownership, a clean issue as to the right of the individual to the reward of his labour and his enterprise."

It is quite clear from this that Sir Alfred, as well as the Labour members, conceive Socialism as national ownership; but even this conception according to him was not publicly proclaimed as an issue by the Labour Party. That although the latter individually subscribed to nationalisation, they kept it in the background when soliciting votes. If this is true, is it because the workers already perceive that nationalisation, whenever it has been applied, has not improved the lot of those who come under it?

The daily papers claimed Sir Alfred's speech as a victory over Socialism. As a matter of fact, according to the reports that favoured him, his objections told more against Capitalism than against Socialism. According to the "Daily Chronicle," he

said: "State Socialism would make machines of everybody." As State Socialism, or Nationalisation, is only Capitalism organised by the State in the interests of the Capitalist class—as the Post Office, Telephones, etc.—it is clear that Capitalism and not Socialism makes machines of everybody but Capitalists.

"Men work best for themselves," said Sir Alfred. The workers, however, have no choice in the matter. The means of wealth production are owned by the Capitalist class, and the workers have to sell their labour-power to members of that class, or go without the necessities of life.

"Taken over the whole population the decrease of wealth is more detrimental than its division," said Sir Alfred; but in that case, what is to be said of the common practice of Capitalists in nearly every industry of restricting production for the purpose of keeping up prices?

"The greatest wealth accumulated by anyone who has created new undertakings is a small percentage of the total wealth he has created for the country," was another statement described by the "Daily Chronicle," as one of Sir Alfred's "pungent aphorisms." But no proof has ever been advanced that those who put capital into new, or old, undertakings, "create" anything. Capital is neither "created" nor produced by the Capitalist. The factories are built, the machinery made, installed and operated by the workers. Whether the Capitalist gain is a large or small percentage—unless he is a very small capitalist and has to do his own supervising—it is added to his banking account without effort on his part.

So much for Sir Alfred's pitiful attempt to show that Capitalism is the best of all possible systems. When he taxes his business intellect for the purpose of remedying existing evils he is even more pitiful. On March 12th he outlined a scheme in the "Daily Chronicle" for dealing with unemployment. His suggestion was that money should be taken from the unemployed fund to subsidise employers who took men off the books of the exchanges.

Of course, such a preposterous idea could have no effect whatever on the number of workers employed. Those taken off the exchanges must either replace others discharged, or squeeze out some of those already employed.

It is not shortage of capital that is responsible for unemployment — though shortage of capital may handicap many Capitalists in a small way of business—but the lack of markets. Production is restricted by Capitalists, through agreements, to keep up prices, because unchecked competition in a limited market, with modern means of production, would bring down prices and reduce profits all round.

All the most important organisations in this country calling themselves Communist or Labour Parties have members in the Labour Party of the House of Commons. Not one of these, either in the debate, or at any time in the House of Commons, have ever said anything to make Socialism clear to the workers. Yet they have always claimed that they would be able to use the floor of the House for its propaganda. The so-called extremists, and out and out Communists, if they ever understood the Socialist position, exhibited no evidence of their knowledge when they spoke. These latter claim to be more advanced than the I.L.P. and Trade Union elements, yet they never raised a voice in protest when nationalisation was falsely termed Socialism by all those who took part in the debate.

To call nationalisation Socialism, and to hold up the Post Office, Telephones, Water Supply, etc., as examples of Socialism, is to spread confusion among the workers. When Sir Alfred Mond or Mr. Lloyd George do this they are guilty of lying; but the Labour members are guilty of that, and treachery as well, because they claim to lead and represent the workers. In any case, if they have nothing better than nationalisation to offer they are utterly unworthy of support by the workers.

F. F.

"Who shall number the patient and earnest seekers after truth, from the days of Galileo until now, whose lives have been embittered and their good name blasted by the mistaken zeal of Bibliolaters?"

Who shall count the host of weaker men whose sense of truth has been destroyed in the effort to harmonise impossibilities—whose life has been wasted in the attempt to force the generous new wine of science into the old bottles of Judaism, compelled by the outcry of the same strong party?"

T. H. HUXLEY.

(Darwiniana, Page 52).



## SOCIALISM AND THE "ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT."

In contemplating the social environments of life as constituted to-day, most people (those people, that is, whose mental horizon is capable of embracing something more than a horse-race or a cinema-show) have been forced, often reluctantly, to arrive at the conclusion that "the times are out of joint"; that the world—at least superficially—is little else than a mad conglomeration of sordid toils and yet more sordid pleasures, of brutal tyrannies and ignoble sufferings, of hypocrisy masquerading in the garb of righteousness, of legalised theft and murder.

Many of these people, mainly of the working class, young, in easier economic circumstances, perhaps, than others of their fellow-workers, have what is called "artistic tastes"; that is, they take a more than cursory interest in literature, or some one or other of the arts, or in science, maybe; they dabble as amateurs in literature, or art, or science, instead of following the example of their relatives and friends who, in most cases, are interested in nothing, or in what is often worst than nothing.

These members of the working class (though, doubtless, the idea would be scorned by the high-born and high-bred "artistic" capitalist circles) have, it would seem, by some almost miraculous process, managed to develop a sense of what is beautiful in nature and art, have desires for a fuller development of their faculties. They feel an urge towards a broader outlook on life, but find, as the years pass and their responsibilities increase, that their economic circumstances, even though easier and more comfortable than those of the majority of their fellow-workers, circumscribe increasingly their views on art and literature, their desires for personal development, their cravings for a fuller existence. At this stage some of them drop out, go with the aimless crowd of mediocre beings; some, disillusioned and without hope, turn, in their bitterness, to the blackest pessimism; a few examine and analyse their economic circumstances, delve into the causes that make such circumstances inevitable, obtain a true conception of their place in nature and in society, and finally seek and discover the only means whereby they can emerge from the thralldom of servitude into the freedom necessary for the full development of their

faculties. They, a small but ever-growing number, embrace the Socialist philosophy, and in so doing obtain a serenity of outlook, a power of facing reality, unknown to those others, who stand at present, irresolute, disillusioned, bitterly resentful against fate, outside the Socialist organisation.

The aforementioned mood of bitterness and pessimism, engendered by the results of an evil environment, is one to which all the more sensitive intellects of all countries in all ages have been particularly prone; but an examination of the works and lives of the men and women who have in their utterances given expression to their disgust with and rebellion against their social and political surroundings will show that the scientific and historical sense have, as a rule, been largely lacking in their mental make-up. Highly emotional, their minds a sensitive plate scratched and torn by every ugly and vicious impression received, they shrink from an analysis of the evils they experience and visualise, and can only voice their feelings of antagonism towards something—they hardly know what—that threatens to engulf them in a black wave of bitterness and irritability. In practically all such people, while their reaction to bad and degrading impressions is greater than the average, their power of analysing these impressions and placing them in their correct historical perspective, is almost nil. Artists—whether writers, or painters, or musicians—are more liable than any other body to find whatever sense of proportion and humour they may have possessed swallowed up in the spectacle of what they consider a mad and diseased universe, and thus it is that so many of the greatest and noblest works of art are so often overshadowed and obscured by a sense of gloom and foreboding.

But, leaving out of the question people of artistic genius or talent, to anyone not totally blind to the realities of life, the brutality, sordidness, and suffering engrained in present-day capitalist society must strike home continually with a force similar to that with which the waves of a tempestuous sea buffet the face of an unwary or inexperienced swimmer.

From the Socialist standpoint, the mere perception to and rebellion against the evils of capitalism is not enough. We, too, detest the world-evils surrounding us; we, too, have a gnawing sense of insecurity and captivity; have the same feelings of revolt against the insults and sufferings to

which we, as workers, as wage-slaves, are subjected. But it is here that we as Socialists part company with those who have not yet acquired a knowledge of the Socialist philosophy. The pessimistic non-Socialist is either afraid or unable to face the facts of life; he cannot or dare not attempt to discover why what are called "social evils" exist; he is unable to understand that such things as the poverty of mind and body, the rapacity, the callousness and viciousness engrained in the human race are the inevitable and irrepressible outcome of a social system which bears within it the seeds of the ills and pains and penalties under which mankind is to-day fated to suffer. He can only visualise society, with all its multitudinous evils, as a thing in itself; he can look neither back to the causes nor foresee the results of those phenomena he hates and deplores; while to the Socialist, to the man who has realised that capitalist society, being an organism, must have been born from the womb of an older form of society, must have its period of growth to maturity, and must finally disintegrate and die (and in dying give birth to a new form of society), to the man the evils which he, also, sees and hates and deplores are seen but as a passing phase in the long-drawn-out history and man and his association with his fellows.

There are good and bad in all things, even in Capitalism. By "good" we mean whatever tends to uplift man, as an individual, as a social unit, as a part of the human race, on to a higher plane of life: by "bad" all that tends to drag him downwards to a level even below the appallingly low one he at present occupies. True it is that under capitalism the "good" is almost negligible, whilst the "bad" increases in volume and intensity as the death throes of the present system become more violent. The Socialist, being neither optimist nor pessimist, sees whatever good there may be, and accepts it for what it is worth; sees also the bad, and while obliged to bow before its power, at the same time rebels in word and deed against the necessity for so doing. He is neither greatly elated nor distressed at whatever comes. Always and at all times he keeps in the forefront of his thoughts and actions his endeavour to encompass and prepare for the downfall of the system (capitalism) that engenders the bad, and to hasten the initiation of the coming social order (Socialism) which will spread and en-

hance the good. Unremitting work, based on knowledge, in the cause of Socialism—herein lies the remedy for the depression and feeling of hopelessness that so often overtakes the non-Socialist who is endeavouring to escape from his capitalistic captivity.

The distance to travel before the consummation of our desires is reached may be short or long. What, then—what, after all, do a few years or a few centuries count in the evolution of mankind? It is the inheritance we hand on to the future that will decide our status in the eyes of those who will follow us, will decide whether we be numbered amongst those weaklings "who have never lived," or with those who, while continuously struggling onward, have only failed in their high endeavours because the fruits of the new order of life were not yet ripe enough to be plucked and enjoyed.

F. J. WEBB.

## MORE FOR A NEW READER.

We presume that you know little of Socialism. Perhaps you have a dim idea that Socialists are terrible people whose deliberate aim in life it is to overturn everything; destroy your most cherished ideals out of sheer downright devilment. Let us have a little heart-to-heart talk on the subject. We will not hold your attention long, but we may perhaps assist you to see things in a different way from what you usually see them.

There are many parties appealing for your support, some of whom do so on the ground that they are Socialist parties. "How am I to know which is the right one?" you may ask. You are bewildered by the multitude of parties who all claim that their object is to help you.

There is a well-known proverb that contains an element of truth. It runs: "God helps those who help themselves." Therefore avoid those who make a great fuss about their desire to help you: seek rather for information from those who urge you to help yourself.

Man is spoken of as being a social animal. He associates with other men—forms part of a society. A society is a group of individuals bound together by a common principle. The larger sense in which the word "society" is generally used refers to the common principle of obtaining a living.



Whatever is referred to as "social" concerns man in his connection with other men. It is the opposite to individual or private. For example, when we say a thing is privately produced we mean that one man produces it without assistance; when we say such a thing is socially produced, we mean that different men produce portions of a thing and their combined efforts make up the finished article. Likewise, when we say a thing is privately owned, we mean one man or a small group of men own it; but when we say it is socially owned, then we mean it belongs equally to the whole of those forming the society.

You are living in a society to-day in which the things produced, and the tools by means of which they are produced (in other words, the wealth of society), are privately owned: that is, owned by one individual or by a small group of individuals—either a single capitalist or a small group of shareholders.

The aim of the Socialist is to make these things social property: to convert these privately owned goods and tools into goods and tools commonly owned by the whole of society. He who acts in such a way as to bring this new state of affairs into being is a Socialist: he who acts in a way that hinders progress towards this end is evidently not a Socialist, no matter what he may call himself.

Owing to the private ownership of wealth the majority of the people of this country are unable to obtain the things they need except by working for those that own them; and these wealth owners can employ whom they please and discharge whom they please, so that the mass of the people depend for their existence upon the desires or fancies of a comparatively few masters. The majority of people are therefore slaves of the wealth owners, because unless they act as the latter wish they are liable to be sacked and lose the wages upon which they depend for getting the necessities of life.

These two types of people, masters and workers, broadly speaking make up society. They form two distinct classes, one of whom depends for a living upon working, and the other upon owning what is produced.

The workers, then, are wage-slaves. The masters are capitalists because they own capital—wealth (tools and so forth) which they advance with the object of getting back more wealth than was originally advanced

or laid out. History will tell you that the wealth the capitalist advances was originally obtained by robbing the mass of the people of their land and liberty.

It may perhaps surprise you to hear that a few hundred years ago there was neither a landless man nor a beggar throughout the whole of this country. When you hear that and see that the mass of the people are without land and practically beggared to-day, you may wonder how such a change has come about. If you want further information of this, go to the nearest library and look for a book entitled, "Industrial History of England," by H. de B. Gibbins. It is a book of only about 250 pages. In it you will find much valuable information of early and recent conditions in this country. You will learn how the land was stolen from the people and passed into the hands of a few individuals; how the people were ruthlessly driven off the land and herded into manufactories; how finally, after many trials and troubles, the one-time member of a peasant commune, owning his land and tools in common, became the wage-slave of to-day, owning nothing but his power to labour, and compelled for his living to sell this power to the present master class, the descendants of those who robbed his forefathers.

So much for the "original" capital of the masters. The extra wealth they obtain over and above that laid out is due to the fact that you produce a quantity of wealth to-day that suffices to pay your wages, make good what is necessary for further production, and still leave a substantial amount over on which the master and his family, and those that minister to the enjoyment of him and his family, live upon. You thus produce surplus wealth—wealth that keeps an idle class in luxury. You keep parasites.

Between you and your masters there is a constant struggle going on over the destination of the wealth produced. You struggle to obtain as large a share of the wealth you produce as possible. It is a share you think of, you don't think of obtaining the whole, because you think of, and argue about, a high or a low wage. Your thoughts are bound up with the wages system. The masters on their side resist your desire for high wages and pay you as low wages as they can. This struggle over the division of the wealth you produce is an expression of what the Socialist calls the class war.

If you have followed the argument so far, it must be obvious to you that the masters will not give up their privileges without a bitter struggle; a struggle that can only end when you have obtained control of the whole of the wealth you produce; in other words, when you have established Socialism.

The masters, in their fight to keep their privileged position, employ any weapon that they think will assist them. The all-powerful weapon is the machinery of Parliament, which gives them control of the Army, Navy, Air, and Police Forces—those forces which they employ against you when particularly bad conditions drive you to go out on strike. This power you give to your master at election time when you vote them into Parliament.

This Parliamentary weapon, however, has one drawback; it is inclined to be a rather open illustration of the opposition between your interests and those of your masters, and is likely to bring to your notice the fact that the modern State is on the side of privilege and against the oppressed.

There are other weapons the masters employ that are less obvious and frequently very effective. Religious teaching is one of them. You are led to believe that some supernatural power hath ordained it that man shall eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, and you are assured that you are the man to whom this precept refers. You usually forget to ask: "What of the master who works not and yet eats plenty?" You are taught that life on this earth is a purgatory through which you must pass in order to reach the paradise somewhere above. In fact, you are taught to think little of, and not worry about, the trials and tribulations of your short life in this world, as it will be all made up to you in the next. But you will notice that those who subscribe most to religious bodies, and who are most anxious that you should accept the religious outlook, take no chances, but avoid the trials and tribulations of this world, leaving the "hereafter" to take care of itself.

Now you can easily see how useful it is to the master that you accept a view such as that outlined above. Being assured of an endless good time hereafter, providing you work hard and obey those who are over you, you are likely to be content with a slave position here below; working under bad conditions at low wages without protesting,

allowing your masters to enrich themselves to what extent they wish.

Among other methods that suit your masters' interests are those that keep your mind occupied with petty details; multitudes of so-called "remedies" for minor evils that waste your time and energy to such an extent that you are prevented from applying the one sweeping solution for all your troubles—the abolition of the cause of your troubles, and that is, as you have seen, the private ownership of wealth.

When the wealth produced, and the tools by means of which it is produced, have been made into the common property of society, no one will want either work or food, because all will give to society of his best and will receive from society the best it can give, regardless of age, sex, or occupation.

We are members of the working class, and we want you to join us and help us to carry on the struggle for Socialism. Why are we anxious for your aid? Are we moved by a desire to help you? If you have followed carefully the position outlined above you will see that we are in the same mess as you are, and that we cannot get out of the mess except by the same way as you. We want Socialism because it offers us the only means of leading healthy and happy lives; but we cannot get Socialism until you want it. Therefore we want you to want Socialism and to join with us to fight for it, then we will all have an equal opportunity of enjoying the best that life can offer.

GILMAC.

"In England, Journalism, except in a few well-known instances, not having been carried to such excesses of brutality, is still a great factor, a really remarkable power. The tyranny that it proposes to exercise over people's private lives seems to me quite extraordinary.

"The fact is that the public have an insatiable curiosity to know everything except what is worth knowing.

"Journalism, conscious of this, and having tradesmen-like habits, supplies the demands. In centuries before ours, the public nailed the ears of journalists to the pump.

"That was quite hideous.

"In this century journalists have nailed their own ears to the keyhole.

"That is much worse."

OSCAR WILDE.



**SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****BRANCH DIRECTORY.**

**BATTERSEA.**—Communications to A. Jones, 3 Matthew-st., Letchmere Estate, Battersea, S.W. Branch meets Mondays, 8.30, at 16 Creek-st., York-rd.

**BIRMINGHAM.**—Communications to L. Vinetsky, 11 Upper Dean-st., Birmingham. Branch meets A.E.U. Institute, Spiceal-st., every Saturday.

**CENTRAL.**—Membership obtained only through the Ex. Committee. Applications to General Sec.

**DEPTFORD.**—Sec., J. Veasey, 24, Marlton-st., E. Greenwich, S.E. 10. Branch meets 1st and 3rd Wednesdays in month, at 8 o'clock, at 435, New Cross-rd., S.E. Discussion after Branch business. Public invited.

**EAST LONDON.**—Communications to A. Jacobs, Sec., 78 Eric-st., Mile-end, E.3. Branch meets first and third Mondays in month at 141 Bow-rd.

**EDINBURGH.**—Communications to Andrew Porter, 12a, Kings-rd., Portobello.

**HACKNEY.**—Communications to the Sec., 78 Greenwood-rd., E.8. Branch meets Fridays, 7.30, at The Arcadians, 42, Amhurst-rd., Hackney Stn.

**HANLEY.**—Branch meets Mondays, Working Men's Club, Glass-st. Communications to Sec., T. Travis, 27, Arthur Street, Cobridge, Staffs.

**ISLINGTON.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8.30, at 144 Seven Sisters-rd., Holloway, N. Communications to W. Baker, 35 Alma-st., Kentish Town, N.W.

**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.**—Communications to Sec., J. Bird, 5 Wellington-avenue, Westcliffe-on-Sea.

**TOOTING.**—Communications to Sec., 3, Lyveden-rd., Tooting, S.W.17. Branch meets Fridays, at Parochial Hall, Church-lane, Tooting, at 8 p.m.

**TOTTENHAM.**—Sec., G. Boyden, 11, Somerset road, Upper Edmonton. Branch meets Fridays, The Trades Hall, 7, Bruce-grove, Tottenham. Discussion after branch business. Public invited.

**WALTHAMSTOW.**—Communications to A. J. Godfrey, 30, Waverley road, Walthamstow, E.17. Branch meets at Workmen's Hall, High-st., every Monday.

**WATFORD.**—A. Lawson, Sec., 107 Kensington-avenue, Watford.

**WEST HAM.**—Branch meets Thursdays at 8 p.m. at 167 Romford rd., Stratford. Communications to P. Hallard, 22 Colegrave-rd., Stratford, E.

**WOOD GREEN.**—Branch meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month at 8 p.m., at Alexandra School, N.22.

**S.P.G.B. PROPAGANDA MEETINGS****LONDON DISTRICT.****Sundays:**

Finsbury Park, 6 p.m.  
Clapham Common, 6 p.m.  
Tottenham, West Green Corner, 7.30 p.m.  
Victoria Park, 3.30 p.m.  
Walthamstow, Church Hill, 7.30 p.m.

**Mondays:**

Highbury Corner, 8.30 p.m.

**Thursdays:**

Dalston, Queen's Road, 8.30 p.m.

**Friday:**

Stratford, Water Lane, 8 p.m.

**Saturdays:**

Edmonton, The Green, 8 p.m.

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.



# THE Socialist Standard

The Official Organ of **THE SOCIALIST PARTY** of Great Britain.

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[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.

## THE CAPITAL LEVY.

The recent war caused an enormous increase in the National debts of most of the belligerent nations, and the burden of finding interest has helped to popularise an old bogey, trotted forward in a new disguise as the Capital Levy. It has been made one of the main planks in the Labour Party's programme, and was presented in various lights and with varying degrees of warmth by Labour men at the General Election. In the main, it seems to have been useful to that party as a rallying cry for the more aggressive of the industrial workers; and in quarters where the votes were sought of the mentally more slavish section, which goes by the misleading name of the middle class, the local members did their best to explain that the levy really didn't mean much. Most opponents relied chiefly upon the iniquity of robbing the capitalist of his savings, etc.

We, however, are not concerned with this purely superficial attitude towards the proposal. As Socialists, we are bent on discovering by what means the position of our class may be advanced. Our class consists of all those people who, not being owners of property, must sell their mental and physical energies to those who are owners. This proposal must stand the general test—Is it or is it not one which is useful to the workers?

In the "Forward" (Saturday, May 5th, 1923), Mr. F. W. Pethick Lawrence, a Labour candidate and prominent advocate, sets out what he calls "The Case for the Capital Levy," with the sub-title, "Lift the Burden of Debt from Industry and Labour."

Now, we are agreed that there is a burden; and, further, that people who have

burdens are naturally interested in having them lifted; but Mr. Lawrence makes the somewhat important omission of not troubling to prove that the debt is a burden *on the workers*. If it isn't, why should the workers trouble to lift the burdens of the capitalist class? And, on the other hand, what are we to think of an organisation which asks them to do so?

Let us consider the matter in an elementary way. First, can Mr. Lawrence deny that a small class does own the bulk of the means of producing wealth in this and other capitalist countries? This is a matter of common knowledge, for which it is not necessary to quote statistics.

Owning the means, the capitalist class also own the products. If you are a boot operative, you know that all the boots, when they are finished, belong to your employer; and so throughout the productive system in which we live. As a worker you receive wages or salary at certain intervals, the length of which is immaterial. Your wages are drawn from the store of wealth produced by you, but owned by your employer. The reason he gives you something he would willingly keep, is surely not that he loves you. It is a simple necessity that you must have the means of obtaining food, clothing, and shelter, recreation, etc., in order that you may continue alive and in a state of sufficient fitness.

Then, what is it that determines for the workers as a whole the amount given in return for services rendered? We contend that, broadly regarded, that amount is based for different sections of workers, under different climatic conditions and with different social standards and different lines of historical development, on their



standard of living. This may change, and in an immediate sense it fluctuates up or down according as there is a comparatively large or small supply of labour, and according to the degree and method of organisation. Generally, however, the capitalist class must pay away so much wealth for the upkeep of the wealth producers, and the surplus is theirs.

But the matter doesn't end there. The same class also controls the political machinery, the Government, in all these capitalist countries. It must control politically in order to safeguard its private ownership. But the great and growing State services cannot be run for nothing. The capitalists must dip into their surplus to find the necessary cash—a proceeding to which they all object very strongly.

Needless to say, sections among the owning class are always willing to hand over their share of the burden to their weaker brethren. Now, the top capitalist dogs and the weaker brethren are all alike dependent on the votes of the workers. Without your support they can do nothing.

And this is where we return to our Mr. Pethick Lawrence.

If the burden rested on the backs of the workers it might be worth while trying to throw it off. But if the workers have no surplus, then they cannot be robbed of what they don't possess; and, in spite of apparent objections, the workers as a whole do not suffer from high, nor benefit from low taxation. They suffer because they are robbed, and they are robbed whether taxes are high or low, and the degree of the robbery has, over a period, no direct or indirect relation to taxation. As we have seen, the workers receive all the wealth they possess from the capitalist owners, and, further, these owners control at present the machinery by means of which taxes are levied.

Now, the workers either receive a surplus over their minimum needs or they do not. If they don't, then they cannot be robbed of that non-existent surplus afterwards. If they do, then the capitalists will have given the surplus either because they are philanthropists or because they are compelled by economic forces. If they are philanthropists, then they will not take back the gift they gave; and if they were compelled to give, then the same forces will prevent them from taking it back.

The burden of taxation for the payment of

interest or the National Debt is *Not* a burden on the workers.

But, say these levy advocates, food prices will be lowered. Possibly this is true, but are you certain you will benefit? Is a railwayman, for instance, worse off on 60s. when it costs 60s. to live, than on 30s. when it costs 30s. to live? And although all workers' wages do not vary automatically on a sliding-scale basis, is there any grade or industry in which wages are not very closely dependent on the general level of prices?

Mr. Lawrence, with unconscious humour, writes: "The workers out of their poverty are paying for all their old-age pensions, all the soldiers' and widows' pensions, the State's contribution to Health and Unemployment Insurance, etc., etc."

The pertinent question Lawrence might answer is this: Would the capitalists, if there were no taxation at all, give the workers a larger share of the wealth produced, and, if so, why?

Mr. Lawrence says: "The main principle of the levy is simplicity itself. It is to pay off debt out of wealth. The wealth of the country as a whole is the wealth of its citizens." This, as I have already explained, is quite untrue. *The wealth of the country as a whole is the private property of the capitalist class.* Only the owners of property can suffer the burden of taxation, and only the owners do suffer. Some of them want you, the propertyless workers, to pull their chestnuts out of the fire, and Mr. Lawrence and the Labour Party are making a bid for office on the strength of offering to do the necessary publicity work.

Mr. Lawrence admits our charge in full. He writes, "Payment of the levy will, in effect, be carried out by means of a re-shuffling of the title-deeds of wealth among wealthy persons, and the actual cancellation of a large amount of war debt."

This is of vital concern to those who hope to get some good cards out of the re-shuffle, but does it matter the least little bit to us whether Mr. Capitalist A. or Mr. Capitalist B. gets the aces? Perhaps Mr. Lawrence and a few others may be suitably rewarded; and perhaps not, for the master class are notoriously ungrateful where there are so many willing servants.

The fact of the matter is that the capital levy, like any other mere juggling with figures, will not alter the amount of real

wealth, land, factories, railways, etc.; it will not alter the worker's position in relation to the owners, and, finally, it will not affect the capitalist class except to the extent that it leads to some redistribution of wealth among themselves.

While the capitalists will on the one hand be relieved from the *burden of paying the debt interest*, they will also, on the other hand, be deprived of the present *means* of paying that interest. Some will gain by reduced taxation what others lose by the paying off by the State of their quota of the debt and their consequent loss of interest on their bonds. The money paid out will, in its turn, be reinvested in industry, and we shall be as we were.

Funnily enough, while the Labour Party wants the Capital Levy in order to stop paying "a vast tribute to the nation's bondholders" (Mr. Lawrence), this same Labour Party wants to create more bondholders to "draw vast tribute" by nationalising the land and compensating the present owners with 5 per cent. bonds redeemable in 30 years (Mr. Snowden's Land Nationalisation Bill now before the House).

The National Debt, too, was produced by wars, chiefly the last war. The Labour Party opposed that one up to the 30th July, 1914, and then vigorously supported it until such time as the capitalists thought it wise to call a halt in 1918. The apologists assure us that next time the Labour Party will act differently, and in conference they carried unanimously a resolution "calling upon the Government to summon an International Conference, and propose thereat immediate and universal disarmament" (*Daily Herald*, 29th June). It was then moved that "The Labour Party in Parliament should vote against all military and naval estimates," and surely a No-More-War Party could do no less. But, as Mr. Henderson pointed out, "It was absurd . . . we could not do without a Navy. If France continued in her present frame of mind, were we to neglect the possibilities of defence?" Mr. Brownlie (A.E.U.) thought it might "embarrass candidates at a future election," and it would throw out of work his members engaged on building battleships!

So it seems that all Mr. Lawrence's work trying to wipe out the last war's debts is going to be rendered vain by Mr. Henderson's next war. Incidentally, how could Mr. Henderson advocate the use of the

armed forces against strikers if there were no armed forces?

After wiping out this war debt Mr. Lawrence says "there will probably be a balance of over £100,000,000 a year on the right side," and then he adds, "Great things can be done with this sum." Glorious! But who is going to decide what "great things" are to be done? Surely the owners; and the capitalists don't voluntarily do great things for the workers. On the other hand, if the workers are of a mind to do so, great things, even greater things, might be done now.

And the workers would stand a better chance of making up their minds if shoddy economists like Mr. Lawrence ceased propagating among them quack nostrums conceived for the salvation of the small fry of the capitalist class. The levy is not to affect owners of £5,000 or less.

Lawrence is aware that "some Socialists contend that it (the Capital Levy) is not Socialism, but only a palliative to buttress up the capitalist system," and he agrees that "it will leave heaps of evils untouched, and it will not take the place of the Socialist remedy for the reconstruction of society." He carefully omits to answer the charge that it will bolster up capitalism, and makes the lame excuse that in meeting "the one purpose for which it is designed, viz., that of cancelling a great part of the debt," it will also remove "some of the worst evils of the present maldistribution of wealth." He does not say it will remedy the maldistribution, and war could equally be commended, on the same ground as the policy of battleship building, i.e., that it removes unemployment. Lawrence doesn't even say what those evils are which the Levy will remove.

In short, as cannot be too often repeated, the workers are poor because they are robbed. They are robbed just the same, high taxes or low taxes or no taxes; big National Debt or no National Debt; great foreign trade or no foreign trade. At present the workers are often worse off when unemployment is widespread than when trade is booming, but is this not simply because they accept the position? However bad trade depressions may be, do the capitalists go without, and, if not, why not?

While there is wealth in existence not being used to maintain the workers who produced it, those people are deliberately or unwittingly playing the capitalist game,



who talk about measures to revive "our trade," whether they be Labour, Liberal, or Communists.

We are Socialists, and do not ask you to seek salvation by reviving capitalist trade. We tell you there is only one solution to your problems.

Lawrence says there are four alternatives before you:—

1. Repudiation.
2. Inflation.
3. A Sinking Fund.
4. Capital Levy.

We say that each and every one of these is a question of no interest or use whatever to the workers. We add a fifth alternative—SOCIALISM. This is the only remedy for present or future working-class ills, and one that can be applied as soon as the workers choose to apply it.

H.

### WHENCE IDEAS.

It is quite a common view that the events of life are governed by the ideas of certain "great" men, some of whom are "good" and some "bad." If the "good" are in the majority then all is well; if the "bad" are in the majority then all is not well.

Ideas are supposed to be due to some peculiar quality that only exists in "great" men's minds, and have no connection with the world around until forced upon a willing or unwilling people.

There are many who believe that Socialism is an idea of this nature, and hence Socialists are referred to as "dreamers" and "idealists."

Socialism is an idea that is born out of the present condition of society. The conditions themselves force the idea into the minds of the workers and are the guarantee of its ultimate accomplishment.

A little thought will convince any average person that material is necessary in order to think at all—and that the material about which each thinks is that which he finds in the world around. This being so the ideas and outlook of people depend, as a rule, upon the way in which they live, or their method of obtaining a livelihood.

When we think, what do we think about? Where do we find our material? We cannot very successfully think about nothing! A child opens its eyes to a certain set of surroundings, and these surroundings

govern the child's outlook on life, and provide it with ideas. As the child grows to the adult, practical life and books furnish matter for thought and shape the outlook of the grown-up.

For the average person the things that are nearest occupy the bulk of his thoughts. The nearest and most important thing of all for the majority is obtaining the necessities of life. Where, as with the rich man, the means of life depend upon profit, so his thoughts turn upon methods of making profit. With the poor man, however, the means of living have to be obtained by working; consequently the poor man's thoughts turn mainly upon work and the problems connected with work. The poor man is the working man. He belongs to a group that depends for a living upon wages. He is therefore a member of the working-class outlook—the opposite to the outlook of the rich man, who is his master. The latter also has a class outlook—the outlook of the master class to which he belongs.

In the course of his occupation the worker tends more and more to observe that he is the backbone of society, that he, by applying his labour power to what the earth provides, produces all the wealth upon which the whole of society lives. Later he begins to wonder why it is that, although his class is the only class necessary to wealth production, yet it receives relatively the smallest share of the wealth produced, the rest going to support a group of idlers. By and by he realises that it is not necessary to support a group of idlers—that if the workers own the wealth they produce then there will be no need for idlers. He becomes a Socialist and takes part in the struggle for Socialism.

GILMAC.

## MANIFESTO OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

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### BLIND ALLEYS.

At a conference recently held by the Y.M.C.A. the question of blind alley occupations for boys was discussed. Some interesting figures were published by the *Daily Chronicle*, which also stated in a leading article that the evil was due to the selfishness of parents and the desire of low-grade employers for cheap labour. The very fact that the majority of workers employed are doing work that requires little skill, while there is a large percentage of unemployed in nearly every skilled trade, proves this statement to be a lie.

Capitalists, low grade or high grade, do not pay skilled workers wages for so-called unskilled work. The jobs that capitalists want filled are mainly low-skilled jobs with low pay. Modern industry is carried on with a relatively small number of skilled workers and a huge majority of low-skilled.

A high proportion of skilled workers is not required with machine production, and the bulk of the wealth in any capitalist country is produced by machinery tended by men, women, boys and girls, who can often learn their tasks in a few days, or even hours.

Under any system of society the production and distribution of wealth must require workers of varying degrees of skill; but it is only under capitalism that each particular kind and degree of skilled labour-power is catalogued and priced. Under capitalism labour-power is a commodity. The strength or ability to perform a particular kind of labour has a price recognised by worker and capitalist, just as the value of a cabinet is recognised by seller and buyer because of the workmanship and materials used in its construction. But just as everybody would admit that it would be foolish for capitalists to expend capital in the production of cabinets that were not wanted, so it must be apparent that parents who trained their boys as cabinet makers when the trade was already overcrowded would be equally foolish.

What shall we do with our boys? is a question always being asked. Every skilled trade is already overcrowded, though occasionally for short periods a particular trade, through an unforeseen rise in the demand for its goods, may have only a small percentage of its members unemployed.

In any case the proportion of workers

relatively high skilled to lower skilled is determined, not by the workers, but by the kind of industrial products in demand and the tools and methods employed in their production. Machinery and scientific discovery eliminate skill and enable the capitalist to avail himself of the lower skilled and cheaper workers, such as women and boys.

To the boys thus employed their daily work is, for them, so many hours of imprisonment that merely tires, and leaves them with no desire for healthy recreation or study.

To pretend, as the *Daily Chronicle* does, that the manufacture of low-skilled and casual workers is due to the selfishness of parents, is sheer hypocrisy. No parent can create jobs for his boys. The majority of workers are themselves low-skilled or casual and on or below the poverty line. They have little or no choice in the matter. The majority of boys are compelled to take the first job that offers; compelled to do so because capitalist industry offers nothing better.

Both the Y.M.C.A. and the *Daily Chronicle* also claim that capitalists in "the lower grades of industry" are largely responsible for the evil, but there is scarcely an industry that does not employ a greater proportion of low-skilled than high-skilled workers; while in many industries highly-skilled workers are paid lower wages than the so-called unskilled of other industries, simply because they are in excess of the demand and not organised to resist encroachments by the masters. There is little difference in capitalists. The small parasite may be more hungry for profits, but the limited company and the large scale concern are better organised and equipped for the purpose of exploitation.

Under capitalism the machinery of production is owned by the capitalist, and the energy of the worker is bought to operate it at a price which enables him to live. The machine condemns him to a life of toil in which there is no hope of intelligent interest or development. But when the worker realises the value of the machine as something which will give him more freedom from the nature-imposed necessity to work, he will no longer complain of the dreariness of his task. With full control of all the material factors in the production of wealth the workers can produce according to their needs. With modern machinery and



methods, each performing his share in the necessary labour, the major portion of the life of every human being can be spent according to his own ideas of happiness or development.

F. F.

### "HARDER LYING."

To distinguish between counterfeit and genuine necessitates close examination. Experts can at a glance detect the spurious, while Socialists know what is and what is not Socialism. But to those whose contact with pseudo socialism is so close that it is accepted by them as "the goods," Socialism, when expounded, seems a different philosophy. In a leader of the *Daily Herald* of Monday, June 25th, headed "Hard Lying," the scribe writes in the following fashion:—

"When Tories of the Banbury type inveigh against Socialism, they blunder into every kind of foolishness, because they take no intelligent interest in public affairs and have never troubled their heads to understand what Socialism means."

Unfortunately there are many Banburys who, having control of political power, and possessing vast wealth, have no need to "trouble their heads," as members of the working class (for a weekly wage or monthly salary) can always be hired to study or understand for them. But even so it cannot be said that they do not understand; they do, and doing so, are always seeking means, by propaganda, misrepresentation and other methods, of diverting the minds of the workers from proper understanding of their class position and socialist knowledge. They, however, are not the only guilty ones, as the following extracts prove. The writer continues as follows:—

"But when a man of the intellectual eminence of Sir John Simon misrepresents Socialism and solemnly warns people against a danger which he knows must be imaginary, it is necessary to nail his false coin to the counter. It is necessary to prove that he uttered it knowing it to be false."

Why this particular lawyer politician should be expected to be exempt from capitalist propaganda it is hard to say, but let the writer continue:—

"On Saturday, Sir John Simon told a gathering of the 'Dubb' family in Yorkshire that the Labour Party aimed at the suppression of private enterprise in all directions, intending to commit the fortunes of this country, the happiness of

every man, woman and child, and the delicately poised mechanism of our international trade, to the crude untried experiment of vast Socialistic schemes."

This indictment the writer disclaims, obviously meaning that the Labour Party are not out for the suppression of private enterprise, a disclaimer with which we are bound to agree.

The writer likens Simon to an utterer of base coin, a clear case of pot and kettle; listen to this:—

"Let us first take the statement that Socialist schemes are crude and untried, would Sir J. apply those epithets to the London Water Board? Would he apply them to our municipal gas and electric light undertakings? Would he hurl them at the L.C.C. tramways, and all the other systems of road transport which are run by ratepayers, not for profits but for use? All these are Socialist schemes." (Writer's italics.)

First he naively states that things are run by ratepayers for use and not for profit! and are socialist schemes. Reform or improvement is the utmost they can be labelled.

The writer continues:—

"To say that the Labour Party aims at anything so nonsensical as a complete and simultaneous suppression of private enterprise is to charge it with lunacy."

In other words, we are promised a social system which will allow private enterprise to operate, and it will be called "socialism," and it will be the essence of sanity! That being so, we shall earnestly hope that in the near future the predominating complaint of the workers will be "lunacy." Could anti-socialist aims be clearer? Now, you workers, adjust your headphones and listen to us.

The common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth, by, and in the interest of, the whole community.

That is Socialism, and anything based differently is not Socialism. Government control or nationalisation of industries under the existing system does not comply with the demand of Socialists, nothing short of the complete overthrow of the capitalist system and the establishment of the co-operative commonwealth will suffice.

This is not the Labour Party's aim; it only wishes to apply remedies that have commended themselves to a British Cabinet and a Royal Commission.

The writer concludes by stating: "It does equal discredit to Sir J. Simon's repu-

tation for honesty and to his political acumen.

"No one can long believe such wild slanders, which merely prove that the Liberals admit the death of Liberalism, and have decided to join with the Tories in the effort to check social improvement by hard lying."

If the writer hoped that the death of Liberalism would improve the vitality of Labour, and suffers disappointment, we would counsel him to hope on, perhaps Simon will see the error of his simple ways and join the Labour Party.

As for the "wild slander which no one can long believe," we hope that the wilder slander here reproduced will also be not so long believed.

GRIFF.

### A BELATED AWAKENING.

An article in the *New Statesman* (23/6/23), entitled "The Temper of Germany," written by Robert Dell, is interesting from many points of view.

For years we endeavoured to convince our readers, by facts and logical deductions from facts, that the so-called German Socialist Party was built upon foundations of sand and was socialist in name only.

We were chided for our criticisms and referred to as "Simon Pures." The four million or so membership of the German Social Democratic Party was held up as an illustration of the value of compromise, and a reform rather than a revolutionary programme.

The outbreak of the big European War brought down this German house of cards. The large German party that was supposed to be sweeping rapidly on to victory turned jingo. The lack of socialist knowledge on the part of its membership, and the trickery of its leaders, was shown by the part it took on the side of the German capitalists against the commercial competitors of the latter. Instead of seeing his enemy in the capitalists of all nations the German worker took up the national attitude and abandoned the field of the class struggle. This attitude, of course, was not reserved for the German worker alone. A similar position was taken up by the workers in all the belligerent countries.

The attitude of the German Social Democratic Party is an object lesson to the

workers of the futility of large numbers where sound principles are lacking; and the foolishness, from the point of view of the working-class movement, of submerging principles and entering into compromises with the enemy in order to obtain a large following.

This lesson has not yet been taken to heart, as witness the formation of Communist Parties and the repeated manifestoes and conferences on "The United Front."

Robert Dell gave belated support to our years-old attitude towards the German S.D.P. when he wrote the following:—

"This diagnosis of the temper of the German masses may seem strange in view of the fact that the German Socialist Party has not shown itself conspicuously internationalist. But it has to be remembered that the Socialist Party was the only effective Opposition before the war, and as such attracted to itself large numbers of people who in England would have been Liberals or even Moderate Conservatives. In 1918 the Majority Socialist leaders were not even in favour of a revolution. They accepted it because they were obliged to. Not much more than a fortnight before the revolution took place Scheideman refused to agree even to the dethronement of William II. in favour of another member of his own family, although Erzberger was among the supporters of the proposal. Scheideman would not abandon his Kaiser. After the defeat of the Kapp *putsch* the Socialists could have done anything they liked—they compromised with the defeated reactionaries. No party is more responsible for the present state of Germany than the Majority Socialists, and no individuals have as great a responsibility for it as Noske and Scheidemann."

When, in the past, we said as much of the German party as is contained in the above quotation, we were sneered at as visionaries. How the earth do move!

It is rather amusing to read the extract and then reflect on the fact that it appeared in a journal that supports the Labour Party—as the criticism fits the Labour Party so well. The same paper has also, in the main, supported the German Majority Socialists condemned by Dell!

GILMAC.

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## The Socialist Standard,

AUGUST



1923

## THE DOCKERS' STRIKE.

Once more the broadcast lie about the "high wages" of the working class has met a refutation in the strike of dockers in various British ports. The poor pay of these workers, coupled with the casual character of their employment, had driven large numbers so close to actual want that the threatened reduction of a shilling a day formed the last straw that caused them to take strike action, even though they would not receive any support from their Union funds because their action was not in conformity with the rules.

The employers claim that as the Board of Trade "cost of living" figures show a reduction of 11 points under the agreement entered into by the Union officials and the employers, wages should be reduced by a shilling a day. The dockers reply that retail prices where they reside have not fallen, and they challenge an enquiry into these figures.

For good reasons the challenge has not been accepted. A short time ago some employers were questioning the Board of Trade figures, but now, when these figures happen to fit in with the employers' case, the opposition is dropped. Moreover, these figures may be handled in different ways for the purpose of obtaining desired results.

Students of economics know that there is no rigid connection between wholesale and

retail prices. The classical instance is that of agricultural produce, where the difference is often fantastic. Another illustration is given to-day by the food merchants who have raised the prices of various articles held in stock, under the excuse—for, of course, no reason for such action can be given—of the strike. A humorous sidelight is given to this point by the complaint of the wholesalers against the wicked retailers for raising retail prices before the saintly wholesalers have had a chance to raise theirs. (*Daily News*, 18/7/23.)

As wholesale and retail prices move not only at varying rates, but often in different directions, it is quite easy to take wholesale figures when they are favourable and use them as a base for calculating the "cost of living."

With a most surprising, not to say suspicious, unanimity, the capitalist Press and the Union officials have joined forces in abusing the dockers for "violating the agreement" by refusing to accept the reduction.

Bully Bevin, grovelling Gosling, and hysterical Williams have all joined in the chorus:—

"Mr. Ernest Bevin, secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, said the Workers' Union was to regard their ten shillings a day as a stop figure. Sporadic fights in single ports were wrong. The agreement ought to be honoured, and if there was to be a fight to maintain their conditions and their stop figure, care should be taken that it should be a complete and well organised one."—(*Daily News*, 4/7/1923.)

This statement contains two pieces of bluff. The first is the yarn about the "stop figure." Neither the Workers' Union nor Bevin have ever made any claim about a stop figure in the negotiations, and the Agreement is wholly silent on the point. The second piece of bluff is where Bevin says, "if there was to be a fight, etc." As he has done all he could to prevent any fight taking place, has urged the acceptance of reduction after reduction in the men's wages, his talk about "if there was to be a fight" is just bunkum.

The *Daily News* for 5th July says:—

"It is clear, however, that under the agreement the shilling must come off, and the men can do little good to their cause by dishonouring their leaders' signature."

○ All this looks convincing on the surface, till one takes notice of a couple of facts. One is that the men have no check on, nor

even information, as to how the figures are compiled. The second and more glaring fact is the one-sided character of the claim. All over the industrial field employers have been treating agreements with contempt and breaking them whenever it suited their purpose. The officials of large organisations, like the railwaymen and the building workers, have meekly accepted, and even defended, the violation of agreements by the employers. The Agricultural Workers' Union claim that 500 men are being victimised for taking part in the late strike in direct violation of the agreement accepted at the closing of the dispute. (*Daily News*, 16/7/1923).

The men, of course, must rigidly keep to the agreements, but the employers may break them when they will! Can anyone be surprised that the men are beginning to see through such a flagrant piece of hypocrisy? Even the *Daily News* is beginning to hedge a little, for on July 12th it says:—

"Great injustices can be perpetrated under the demand for respect of agreements . . . and the spontaneous nature of the revolts of the dockers and the miners against their agreements suggests, perhaps almost proves, that they need at least a careful examination."

It is a healthy sign that the men should at last take action to resist any further worsening of their conditions. The refusal to accept the advice of officials and the turning down of the clown, Ben Tillett, would be encouraging indications that the men are at last awakening to the folly of "following leaders," if these actions were based upon knowledge of their case. Unfortunately the backing down of the "unofficial committee" seems to show that the movement is a blind resistance against a reduction of wages rather than a reasoned attempt to take control of affairs into their own hands. Even so, such action is better than mere apathy and a continued acceptance of the hero worship that was shown when presentations of large sums of money were made to Bevin for successfully negotiating reductions in wages.

The chief danger at present is that the men may be deceived by the lies of the union officials into dribbling back to work. Let the men decide to act as a whole, whether to stay out or return to work. When appointing representatives to discuss terms with the employers it should be made quite clear that these representatives should

have no power of deciding the terms, but that they should be submitted to the vote of the men in every case.

It is the men who pay the Union officials their salaries—often reaching £800 per year—it is the men and their wives and families who have to bear the suffering caused by these struggles, not the Union officials. Clearly, then, it should be for the men to decide what conditions they will accept.

There is no real remedy for these evils while private property in the means of life continues. The dockers and other workers should study the conditions under which they exist; how they are dependent upon the employers' permission to live at all, and then learn how the master class rule society through their control of the political machinery. Then they will set to work to take such control into their own hands and so have the ordering of their own lives.

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## AFRIC'S SUNNY FOUNTAINS.

One must admit there is a charm about some of the old, simple hymn tunes that survives the decay of one's beliefs. Perhaps the mellowing of the years has toned the memory of hot, stuffy, fidgetty afternoons, spent in Sunday School classrooms, and left but the dim impression of droning harmonium and simply melody. To these were often wedded homely sentiments and words full of the colour and romance that appeal to the fresh imagination of a child.

"There is a green hill far away."

With the clear eyes of childhood one could clearly see that grassy knoll, though most children were unable to fathom why it should be

"Without a city wall."

Then, especially when one of the scholars had to emigrate, we would devoutly sing—

"O hear us when we cry to thee  
For those in peril on the sea."

One pictured the raging sea, and the wistful face of our late playmate peering over the taffrail. Then there was that superb piece of colour composition:

"From Greenland's icy mountains  
To India's coral strand,  
Where Afric's sunny fountains  
Roll down their golden strand.  
From many an ancient river,  
From many a palmy plain,  
They call us to deliver  
Their land from error's chain."

On the whole the memories one preserves from those days are happy ones. One saw the blue ice of the frozen North. One saw the pink coral and golden sands of the sunny South. One saw the smooth rush of a mighty river and saw the waving palms of the tropics. And there, amidst these natural beauties, but one blot appeared. The pathetic figure of the savage, turning from his uncouth gods of wood and stone, and stretching out his arms to us, appealing, as the hymn said, to be delivered from the galling chains of error.

It is satisfactory to reflect that one has lived long enough to see the process in action. We are indebted to the issue of May 12th of the *New Statesman* for an illuminating account of our attempt to deal with one of Afric's sunny fountains. Their correspondent J.H.H. tells of a small tribe of about 1,500 Hotteatots, known as the Bondels, living in the direst poverty in a corner of South West Africa. To secure

their miserable flocks from the raids of jackals, hyenas, and other predatory beasts, they were obliged to keep numbers of dogs. To show them how different life under the Union Jack could be, compared with their late masters, the Huns, the Government inflicted upon them a dog tax, which is described as preposterous. Possibly the simple Bondels still thought, as the Governor's name was Hofmeyer, they were still under the tyranny of the Boche, and decided not to pay it. The Governor, doubtless inspired by the two last lines of Land of Hope and Glory—

"God who made thee mighty,  
Make thee mightier yet,"

decided to "inflict a severe and lasting lesson" on them. He therefore proceeded against this mighty nation of 1,500 miserable black men with artillery, aeroplanes, machine guns, and all the implements of modern warfare, and proceeded to wipe out indiscriminately men, women, children and cattle. It is difficult to arrive at the exact result. Some say not an adult male survived. Some that the prisoners were nearly all murdered. Some that there were no "wounded."

When the story got known there were apparently sufficient people still in possession of enough humanity to be shocked, and to call for an enquiry. The enquiry was held, and nearly 12 months after the Bondels were delivered from error's chain the report published. According to the *Statesman's* correspondent, it is one of the most unsatisfactory documents ever published on a punitive expedition. The enquiry was held everywhere *in camera*, and the evidence of 124 witnesses completely suppressed. On the initial point as to whether a rebellion existed to call for repression not a tittle of evidence is given. There are no casualty figures, no numbers of women and children blown to atoms by aeroplane bombs, no numbers of prisoners, no numbers of survivors even. Mention is made of the brutal treatment of prisoners, but no reply is given to those who allege that there were no wounded. One thing appears to be certain anyway, there are not enough Bondels left to be interested in the further report that the correspondent demands. Whether they "called us to deliver" or not, they have been effectually freed from error's chain. Thus are laid the foundations of Empire. W. T. H.

## GOD OR THE ENGINEERS.

Sad, in its immediate results, as is the recent eruption of Mount Etna, it is still more distressing to learn how great is the hold of religious superstition, and the ignorance of the most elementary facts of natural science it signifies, upon the minds of the people. For although the volcanic overflow only actually affects some few thousand wretched Sicilian peasants, the newspapers convey the tidings to their readers in the outside world in a manner most acceptable and understandable by them, and we have, therefore, in our daily newspapers practically no reference in a scientific manner to what, of course, is a natural phenomenon, but are entertained by stories of protecting patron saints, praying peasants, and priests appealing to God to stop the flow. Thus the *Westminster Gazette* (21/6/23) reports:—

"The eruption of the Mount Etna volcano continues, but by a miracle the town of Linguaglossa, with its 15,000 inhabitants, appears to have been saved from destruction."

"A mountain spur just outside the town has diverted the flow of boiling lava away from the town, where ever since the eruption started the people have been in a state bordering upon madness owing to the fear of destruction and the terrible heat."

"The stream of lava runs to a depth of 20 feet and to a breadth of 500 feet, and in its course has demolished the village of Casozza and fifty houses."

"The statue of the patron saint of Linguaglossa, St. Egidio, stands close to the mountain spur which has diverted the flow from the town, and yesterday priests and people knelt before this statue praying for their town's salvation.—'Central News.'"

### "PROTECTING SACRED STAFF."

"They had carried the saint's staff, which is kept in a richly decorated coffer, through the streets in procession to the spot reached by the lava. Afterwards, fearing that the staff might be stolen by the inhabitants of the neighbouring district of Castiglione, they handed it over to the Bishop, and it is now being zealously watched over by several citizens. It was formerly stolen by the people of Catania, for its supposed miraculous powers.—'Reuter.'"

"A Naples message says that Professor Ottorino Fiore, teacher of volcanology and a lifelong student of Mount Etna, states that the eruption will last probably a fortnight.—'Exchange.'"

Although the mountain spur was there before the statue of the saint, the latter gentleman has collared all the credit, and although Professor Ottorino Fiore may prove to be correct, the priests will doubtless see to it that God and the Roman Catho-

lic Church share the honours between them when it is a *fait accompli*.

We learn, however, from an evening paper of the same day that the volcano, after slowing down a bit, had resumed its former fury, and that in spite of St. Egidio the mountain spur was no longer proving a barrier to the ever-increasing stream of burning lava. Engineers were then set to work to dig trenches to divert its course, with the result that the town of Linguaglossa was saved for the time being. Did the saint then fall from popular favour? Not a bit of it! He became more of a hero than ever, as witness the *Daily Sketch* (22/6/23):—

"A rumour spread yesterday that the neighbouring town of Castiglione intended to steal the St. Egidius statue and crozier from the people of Linguaglossa, its legitimate possessors."

"Men, women and children seized whatever weapons came to hand, and rushed to the spot where the protecting statue faced the now almost quiescent lava."

"Finding there some innocent inhabitants of Castiglione who had never dreamed of stealing the sacred image, they attacked them with wild fury, and but for the timely intervention of a body of Fascisti the visitors would have been killed."

Apparently, then, although appeals to God were useless, and it was left to the spades of the engineers to save the situation, in the minds of the poor peasants no doubt exists that the former method did the trick. And for this no one who has read Zola's "*Verité*" will deny the priests the credit. We can imagine them playing upon the fears of a terror-stricken mob, distraught by apprehension and suffering, and taking every advantage of the circumstances to regain the hold that the gradual unfolding of the book of science is wresting from them day by day. These rural priests and parsons are the outposts of capitalism no less in Sicilian villages than in the villages of England. It may seem supererogatory to declaim against the foolishness of a priest-ridden Italian mob, but to the Socialist it is just as important a manifestation of the slave position of the international working class, as the shooting down of strikers in Featherstone or Chicago. The destiny of the Catanian peasant is that of the mill-worker of Wigan. Slavery is their common lot. Their emancipation must be the same way.

And we in England, who were rather pre-occupied at the time in praying that the



sun would shine down upon Ascot, will doubtless be asked to attend thanksgiving services, to offer up thanks to God for stopping the eruption (and presumably for starting it), just as we were asked to return thanks for the cessation of the late war—although we *could* blame the starting of that on to the Kaiser. The pity of it is that lots of us will do it without question. Not because we have never been able to question. Never before in the whole history of the human race was knowledge so accessible to the multitude. What is it binds us in our present position? Fear? We have nothing to fear, nothing to lose but our chains. We have the weapon wherewith to free ourselves from economic serfdom and intellectual repression in the Socialist Party of Great Britain. **WE ARE THE SOCIAL ENGINEERS!** S. H. S.

### INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATION. THE SOCIALIST VIEW.

Evidence is continually forthcoming that the subject of industrial organisation, while of considerable interest to many workers, is also one upon which a large amount of ignorance and confusion exists. The reasons for the existence of any form of organisation among those engaged in industry, the powers of the workers so organised, and the ultimate object of such organisation, are misconceived alike by the avowed reactionary and the alleged reformer, together with many a so-called revolutionist.

Why do Trades Unions exist? The reactionary, if he allows that they should exist at all, considers their sole legitimate function should be the prevention of disputes between the workers and their masters. In his view the workers should maintain expensive officials, with unlimited authority, for the purpose of pursuing a peace-at-any-price policy. The reformer regards the Trades Unions as a convenient basis for the formation of a political party of place-hunters. He considers the sufferings of the workers and their struggles on the industrial field as the driving force behind the careers of the leaders. He forcibly condemns any activity which comes into conflict with this supreme aim.

Outside the Socialist Party there is not a single political party which does not subordinate the immediate interests of the working-class to those of the master-class

and their lackeys. But even among those who frankly reject all political parties (the Socialist Party included) confused ideas are current. While some exaggerate the Trades Unions into the sole conceivable agent of working-class emancipation (or, alternatively, some other form of industrial organisation), we have on the other hand those who pretend that any form of organisation is unnecessary. We are told that the workers will so improve their conditions of life by economic action that the capitalist-class will automatically lose control of the means of life and disappear. The workers are thus tempted to neglect their essential task of organising to secure political control of the forces, military and industrial, which at present determine their condition.

The Socialist observes that there are today two social classes; the working-class, by far the great majority of the population, has no share in the ownership and control of the means of life, and consequently exists by the sale of the only commodity it possesses (*i.e.*, the power to labour) to the master class; the few who do own the means of life, who, by the use of this power in the process of production, secure possession of all other commodities. From the sale of these commodities the master-class draws the means to support its luxurious existence. The relationship between the masters and the workers centres immediately round the sale of labour-power, and, ultimately, round the ownership of the means of life. The relationship is essentially one of *struggle*, and it is of this struggle that the organisations of the classes, industrial and political, are born. The industrial organisations arise from the immediate struggle over the price of labour-power. The masters organise to obtain it as cheaply as possible; the workers organise to sell it as dearly as possible. The struggle results in the workers getting on an average sufficient for the maintenance of their class, as such, that is as a slave-class doomed to minimum rations in return for an ever-increasing maximum output.

The development of industry by means of inventions and improved methods of production results, not only in yielding an increasing share of the product to the masters, but in the concentration of capital and consequently in the greater bargaining power of the masters. Yet in the face of the

worsening of their economic position, the workers' organisation lags far behind that of the masters in efficiency. The cause lies in the ignorance of the workers. To combat this ignorance is an essential function of the Socialist Party.

We point out to the workers that their interests as vendors of the commodity labour-power are opposed to those of the masters. This knowledge is *essential* to any improvement of the industrial organisation of the working-class; but, further, we show that even with the most perfect form of industrial organisation conceivable under capitalism the price of labour-power cannot rise for any length of time above the subsistence level of the slave. If the workers wish to enjoy to the full the fruits of their labour they must abolish their commodity status. They must obtain possession of the means of life. This can only be done by means of political organisation.

The economic organisations of the master-class do not secure to that class their property. Without the machinery of government at their back title-deeds, bonds and share-vouchers would be so much paper. That and nothing more. Behind the letter of the law the armed forces of the State are ready to execute swift judgment on the law-breakers of the working-class. It is not in industrial organisation, then, that the hope of the workers lies. Necessary it undoubtedly is as an essential feature of capitalism, and the very existence of the working-class itself, but more than that, under capitalism, it cannot be. It is a weapon of defence covering an unavoidable retirement in the face of economic development.

What the workers need is to turn industrial defeat into political victory, with the sole object of establishing Socialism, *i.e.*, a form of social organisation owning in common, controlling democratically, and administering the means of life in the interests of all. E. B.

### BRAINS AND BULLETS.

HOW THE S.D.F. FIGHTS FOR SOCIALISM. "Few advanced thinkers have devoted more time to promoting international fraternity than Thorne. . . . He championed the cause of the Entente, and took part in the campaign for voluntary recruiting."

—Will Thorne's Election Address, 1922.

### THE RAVINGS OF A HIRED SCRIBE.

"If Labour Rules," is the subject of an article recently contributed to the columns of "The Sunday Pictorial" by the chief contributor to that journal, Mr. Lovat Fraser. Mr. Horatio Bottomley once occupied the position of chief contributor to the "Sunday Pictorial," but since his well-earned "retirement" the position has been occupied by Mr. Fraser.

It appears from his article that Mr. Fraser is scared out of his wits. He is shuddering, at so much per "shudder," of course, lest something disastrous should happen to "British Working Men."

The source of the trouble is that a conference has been held at Hamburg. The conference was convened for the purpose of devising ways and means of uniting the "Socialist" movement on an international basis. The British delegation, which numbered over forty, included such real live "representatives of British Labour" as J. H. Thomas, Arthur Henderson, and Sydney Webb.

Mr. Fraser tells us that after a good deal of talking at Hamburg, a new organisation was formed, which is to be known as the "Socialistische Arbeiter Internationale." The name is sufficient to make any "true Britisher" turn upside down, but there is something far more terrible. The President, Otto Wels, is a German. The two French members of the executive are notorious pro-Germans. The two members from the United States are not American born; one being by birth an Austrian, and the other a Russian Jew. And if all that is not sufficient to transform the blood of the average Britisher into liquefied margarine, "every man upon the executive is an avowed champion of Germany."

The greater part of the proceedings at this conference, says Mr. Fraser, were really a demonstration in favour of Germany. Hence he laments:—

"Nearly a million of our countrymen died in the Great War, and if they could have risen from their graves and contemplated the Hamburg jamboree, they might well have thought they died in vain."

And so say all of us. For, after all is said and done, one can never tell with certainty what the dead are likely to think in the event of having risen from the grave. But we think we can say without fear of logical contradiction that the last thing in the world



that those who died in the Great War would be likely to think about is the conference at Hamburg. What might engage their thoughts is the reward they would have received for having rendered their services to "King and Country." The constant visits to the Labour Exchange, and the continual struggle against starvation, are things they would most likely be concerned about. They might even think that after all the Great War was not fought in the defence of "little nations," and that the Socialist was right when he said that the war was carried on because of the quarrel between rival groups of capitalists concerning trade routes and the world's markets.

Anyhow, there are many reasons why they might think they died in vain, apart from what took place at the Hamburg Conference.

The chief complaint of Mr. Fraser is that in the event of a Labour Government being elected it will have to obey "a foreign pro-German executive." Now let us hasten to assure Mr. Fraser—that is, if he needs assurance, and did not write the article whilst deliberately lowering one eyelid, that there is no reason whatever for those he represents to fear the election of a Government composed of such men as those who made up the British delegation at Hamburg. These people may use the title of Socialist, but their actions—which, we are told, speak louder than words—disqualify them from a genuine claim to the title. They have shown over and over again that they can assist in carrying on the capitalist system quite as ably as Liberals and Tories. Of course Mr. Fraser knows this, and one gathers from his article that had the executive been made up of men such as J. H. Thomas and Arthur Henderson, to the exclusion of any representative from Germany, then not a word would have been written about the matter in the "Sunday Pictorial." We, of the Socialist Party, repudiate those who met at the conference at Hamburg. As for their professed Internationalism, we need only refer to their activities in connection with the late war to show what humbugs they are.

Our point with Mr. Fraser is to expose the hypocrisy of his pretending to shudder at the prospect of British working men being ruled by "foreigners."

The workers of Britain, like the workers throughout the world, are ruled by those

who own the means of life, and whether those who rule are British, French, German, or Americans, matters not one iota to the working class. The point that should engage the serious attention of the workers is the means they should employ to abolish class rule altogether. If the workers enquire into the laws of capitalist society, they will learn all about the process by which they are robbed of the wealth which they produce and the reason why they are poor in the midst of plenty. They will learn that the cause of their trouble is not to be explained through the hoary old stunt of the "foreigner," but is to be explained through the existence of the class ownership of the means and instruments of wealth production. Having learned this, they will organise politically for the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of the Socialist form of society, wherein classes will not exist, because the means of living will be owned and controlled by and in the interest of the whole community.

R. REYNOLDS.

### MACHINERY AND UNEMPLOYMENT.

One of the most heard of problems to-day is unemployment. On every hand one hears of general trade stagnation and men out of work, and yet on every hand one can see the installation of new ways and means for saving that very thing for which thousands are searching—WORK.

A few illustrations will make my point clear.

Only a few months ago each of the lifts at the tube railway stations had to have a man to manipulate it; now it is possible for two men to control, by means of a new arrangement of switches, four or more lifts—one man above ground controlling the down working, and one man below ground controlling the up working. Here we see a clear saving of 50 per cent. in labour alone is effected.

The latest device that has appeared in road repairing is the pneumatic concrete breaker. Two men are necessary for the operating of this machine, though one man can work it at a pinch. One man holds and directs the machine (chisel), and the other clears away the pieces to enable the first to see where to place the chisel. Judging by appearances the vibration the man behind

the machine has to stand is likely to convert him into a nervous wreck in a short time. I am unable to say exactly how many men the pneumatic concrete breaker displaces, but I would estimate the number at about twelve!

One of the daily papers has just installed a remarkable machine for the rapid making of the moulds which are necessary for the production of the semi-circular sections of type used in the up-to-date printing presses; the presses themselves do away with many hours of labour by folding and counting the papers which they print. There is also another new machine lately installed in the printing trade for the casting of decorative border, etc., "virtually by the mile."

In the shipping trade economy of labour is the order of the day. The great ships are rapidly being converted from coal into oil burning vessels. The economy effected by this is tremendous, as at least half the number of men previously employed as stokers can now be dispensed with, to say nothing of the other economies such as in loading and so forth.

The great strides made in agriculture have enormously decreased the number of labourers required to produce a given quantity. The steam tractor working the plough performs almost unbelievable feats; while the later oil driven tractor, which works with surprising speed, was often seen during the war driven under complete control by a girl.

The wonderful harvesting machine, which reaps and binds the corn, is another of the remarkable labour-saving devices introduced into agriculture.

The above examples illustrate the fact that the tendency in modern times is to reduce the amount of labour required for the production of the things needed by the population of the earth. Is it not, therefore, extraordinary that numbers of people should be suffering from a lack of the necessities of life at a time when these things can be produced more rapidly and easily than ever before? In our midst we find men and women without the means of life, not because there is a shortage (the shops are literally choked with food, clothing, etc.), but because these people cannot find employment.

In spite of so many being without work, the people with work to give must needs be

always obtaining new devices to diminish the amount available. These devices which should lighten the burden of the worker, on the other hand have the effect of speeding him up and reducing his chances of obtaining employment.

The sole reason for this state of affairs is to be found in the fact that to-day all things are socially produced, but privately owned. No article, however simple, is the work of one man alone; other men had expended energy in the getting of raw material, transport, and so forth, without which such an article would be unable to appear upon the market.

Society has arrived at the stage of social production, but it has not yet reached the stage, only one step further, of social ownership. To-day, the privileged few take the whole of the product of the workers, returning to the latter on the average little more than the bare necessities of life. The reason this next step has not been taken is that the workers have not desired it.

The workers can only get out of their present slave conditions by their own efforts; no heaven sent genius can accomplish it for them. They must learn that they hold the means of emancipation in their own hands, as the working section of the community actually hold the overwhelming majority of the votes; at present, however, they lack the knowledge which would enable them to use that vote in their own interests.

When the workers have learnt how best to use their vote, then will come the "reckoning." By "reckoning," I mean the reckoning or calculating out of the capacity of men and machines to see how they can be best employed in the interests of the Commonwealth, and how much the hours of labour can be reduced.

This will mean that the awful competition of men for jobs will be a thing of the past; that all will contribute their quota for the benefit of all and not, as to-day, for the benefit of a privileged few; in short, it means a re-organisation of the affairs of the world for the equal benefit of the whole of its inhabitants.

G. H. C.

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**SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****BRANCH DIRECTORY.**

**BATTERSEA.**—Communications to A. Jones, 8 Matthew-st., Letchmere Estate, Battersea, S.W. Branch meets Mondays, 8.30, at 16 Creek-st., York-rd.

**BIRMINGHAM.**—Communications to L. Vinetsky, 11 Upper Dean-st., Birmingham. Branch meets A.E.U. Institute, Spiceal-st., every Saturday.

**CENTRAL.**—Membership obtained only through the Ex. Committee. Applications to General Sec.

**DEPTFORD.**—Sec., J. Veasey, 24, Marlton-st., E. Greenwich, S.E. 10. Branch meets 1st and 3rd Wednesdays in month, at 8 o'clock, at 435, New Cross-rd., S.E. Discussion after Branch business. Public invited.

**EAST LONDON.**—Communications to A. Jacobs, Sec., 78 Eric-st., Mile-end, E.8. Branch meets first and third Mondays in month at 141 Bow-rd.

**EDINBURGH.**—Communications to Andrew Porter, 12a, Kings-rd., Portobello.

**HACKNEY.**—Communications to the Sec., 78 Greenwood-rd., E.8. Branch meets Fridays, 7.30, at The Arcadians, 42, Amburst-rd., Hackney Stn.

**HANLEY.**—Branch meets Mondays, Working Men's Club, Glass-st. Communications to Sec., T. Travis, 27, Arthur Street, Cobridge, Staffs.

**ISLINGTON.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8.30, at 144 Seven Sisters-rd., Holloway, N. Communications to W. Baker, 35 Alma-st., Kentish Town, N.W.

**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.**—Communications to Sec., J. Bird, 5 Wellington-avenue, Westcliffe-on-Sea.

**TOOTING.**—Communications to Sec., 3, Lyveden-rd., Tooting, S.W. 17. Branch meets Fridays, at Parochial Hall, Church-lane, Tooting, at 8 p.m.

**TOTTENHAM.**—Sec., G. Boyden, 11, Somerset road, Upper Edmonton. Branch meets Fridays, The Trades Hall, 7, Bruce-grove, Tottenham. Discussion after branch business. Public invited.

**WALTHAMSTOW.**—Communications to A. J. Godfrey, 30, Waverley road, Walthamstow, E. 17. Branch meets at Workmen's Hall, High-st., every Monday.

**WATFORD.**—A. Lawson, Sec., 107 Kensington-avenue, Watford.

**WEST HAM.**—Branch meets Thursdays at 8 p.m. at 167 Romford rd., Stratford. Communications to P. Hallard, 22 Colegrave-rd., Stratford, E.

**WOOD GREEN.** Branch meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month at 8 p.m., at Alexandra School, N. 22.

**S.P.G.B. PROPAGANDA MEETINGS****LONDON DISTRICT.****Sundays:**

Finsbury Park, 6 p.m.  
Clapham Common, 6 p.m.  
Tottenham, West Green Corner, 7.30 p.m.  
Victoria Park, 3.30 p.m.  
Walthamstow, Church Hill, 7.30 p.m.

**Mondays:**

Highbury Corner, 8.30 p.m.

**Thursdays:**

Dalston, Queen's Road, 8.30 p.m.

**Friday:**

Stratford, Water Lane, 8 p.m.

**Saturdays:**

Edmonton, The Green, 8 p.m.

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.



# THE Socialist Standard

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[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.]

## THE PARALYSING PAST.

Lytton Strachey relates of Queen Victoria that, after the death of Prince Albert, she became more and more perturbed by the lack of stability and permanence in her surroundings. When she was young she had looked forward with some fear perhaps, but certainly with eagerness, to the future, but as she grew old she found that the friends and advisers of her youth were taken from her one by one, and even the institutions of society and the Empire developed and decayed before her eyes. She was, after all, a quite ordinary old lady of the nineteenth century, and as she had had to adapt herself to the strange situation of being the embodiment of all the pomp and dignity of the leading nation of the age, it was not surprising that with her the desire for security became an obsession. She set herself to the task of petrifying the world as it was, and of suspending the forces of disintegration.

"She gave orders that nothing should be thrown away—and nothing was. There in drawer after drawer, in wardrobe after wardrobe, reposed the dresses of seventy years. But not only the dresses—the furs and mantles and the subsidiary frills and the muffs and the parasols and the bonnets—all were arranged in chronological order; dated and complete . . . mementoes of the past surrounded her in serried accumulations. In every room the tables were powdered thick with the photographs of relatives; their portraits, revealing them at all ages, covered the walls; their figures, in solid marble, rose up from pedestals, or gleamed from brackets in the form of gold and silver statuettes. . . . And it was not enough that each particle of the past should be given the stability of metal or of marble; the whole collection, in its arrangement, no less than its entity, should be immutably fixed. There might be additions, but there might never be alterations. . . . Every single article in the Queen's possession was photographed from several points of view. . . . The fate of every object which had undergone this process was thenceforth irrevocably sealed. The whole multitude once and

for all, took up its steadfast station, and Victoria, with a gigantic volume or two of the endless catalogue always beside her, to look through, to ponder upon, to expatiate over, could feel, with a double contentment, that the transitoriness of this world had been arrested by the amplitude of her might."

You will smile at the picture, perhaps, at the same time sympathising a little with this exhibition of human weakness. For although we cannot all enjoy the troublesome delights of being Queen Victorias, the hankering after the imagined peacefulness of stagnation, and the desire to peg down the universe, or our little corner of it, are not restricted to old ladies and did not die with the nineteenth century. We are all possessors, in some degree, of the facility for retaining experiences and using them for the formation of habits. If we hadn't this power, life would be one long round of painful repetitions of error, and, in fact, it is difficult to imagine the continuance of human society at all under such conditions; but the price we have to pay is the disinclination we have for altering our habits when once use has made them natural. Every one of us would, if he could, sit back leisurely and content, and contemplate the blessedness of things as they are. It has chanced, however, that we were born in an age when things are not by any means blessed, and either we must deaden our perceptions by swallowing the illusions of religious and political charlatans or we must set ourselves to find the remedy. Individuals rarely set themselves this task from choice; our preference for the old familiar ways of thought and action leads us first to try every known but fruitless remedy before we will recognise that new problems need new solutions. When therefore one system



sinks into decay the energy to conceive and construct a new society must come from those who, despite their efforts to maintain themselves, have been forcibly deprived of status and security and cut off from traditional links with the past. And, again, no such revolutionary purpose can gain wide acceptance until the old conditions have become so unbearable that we cannot tolerate their continued existence.

We have arrived now at a stage of capitalist development in which it is becoming more and more difficult for the problems of the workers to be shelved any longer, and their solution within the system is a sheer impossibility, but as we find in every historical epoch, custom dies hard and new ideas progress but slowly. All the acquired ingenuity of individuals is first directed to stemming the tide of dissolution, and in view of this it is not surprising that old institutions should live on tenaciously long after they have become economically absurd and politically a mere obstruction. Discontent among the workers is fairly general, while among the capitalists there is a growing realisation that unless they can succeed in allaying the discontent they will fall victims to it. It is readily understandable why the latter, who view society from above, should look backwards to find remedies for to-day's problems, but the so-called leaders of the workers, many of them self-styled revolutionaries, are also in the ranks of the Queen Victorias.

In the war days, when the ruling class were in difficulties and the workers particularly restive, the talk was all of the new world. Now our Trade Union officials and Labour Leaders, the men, "of vision," can talk of nothing but the necessity of not going below the pre-war standards, and they and the business men are united in casting longing eyes on the supposed happy days of 1914. The prophets, who we are told will show us the way to our earthly paradise, can do nothing better than discuss financial schemes and currency reforms to get us back to 1914 prices. Labour men, Liberals, Conservatives and Communists are all devising plans to win back our pre-war trade. Liberal journalists on Labour's Daily sigh for a return of the clean and gentlemanly politics that existed before the devil, Mr. Lloyd George, turned the world awry. The agricultural labourer's wise men can think of only one policy, that of

asking the Government to give them back their wages board. The dockers' officials tremble with fear over the unofficial strike lest it should lead to the destruction of a great mass of those much-sought-after seals on the worker's slavery, known as wage agreements.

Ramsay MacDonald is forever perturbed lest the ancient usages of our Parliament be departed from. We have, in fact, reached a point where the feeling of unrest is so acute that the very worker's organisations, existing nominally to hasten the process of change, have become rocks of stability for the ruling class.

The "Industrial Group of the House of Commons," composed of business men, recently issued a warning to the Government, in which they "viewed with apprehension" the "disruptive force of unemployment on the trade unions, which are a safeguard of industrial peace." In particular they "feared" that unless the Government did something the Amalgamated Engineering Union would disappear. (*Daily Telegraph*, 26/7/1923.)

In fact, like Queen Victoria, these captains of industry, these Labour Leaders, and many of the workers, too, want all the old junk of capitalism photographed, recorded and labelled, so that they, poor bewildered sheep, may rest secure in the knowledge that the capitalist system will be to-morrow to its minutest detail just as it is to-day. Better to rot or starve in the decrepit hovel they know than venture out and risk dying strange deaths out of their beds. The capitalist would rather deal with a certain known and limited evil, the trade unions, than face the terror of the unknown. Think of the dockers' strike! If the unions were to go, what might there not be underneath? Hell itself. The Labour Leaders would far rather prepare for the next war, while protesting their determination to prevent it, than face up to the situation as it really is and decide to help scrap the social system which makes war.

But all their anxiety will avail them nothing; the conditions of 1850, which made the Amalgamated Engineering Union the "new model" for all the workers, have passed with the challenging of Britain's world supremacy, and the Engineering Union is now only an example of what the workers ought to avoid.

Sooner or later these leaders must justify

themselves by their deeds, and as they cannot remove the cause of discontent, the discontented will some day awake to the necessity of removing the present form of society.

Before they arrive at this recognition a painful and necessarily slow mental process must be gone through, its speed increasing as the pressure of circumstances becomes more insistent. They have got to see that the limits of social development set by private ownership have already been reached, and that the continuing growth of our powers of production can only aggravate the present evils.

The capitalist class, having themselves once had to take charge of a similar dangerous situation, successfully developed the required revolutionary energy. They ushered in their social system, brought it to its triumph, and enjoyed the fruits of success. They then allowed their functions of initiating, organising and directing to fall to other hands, those of the workers. They made Socialism possible, but Socialism can be established only when the workers develop the same confidence in their powers, the same self-reliance and determination that characterised the capitalists who threw down the challenge to feudalism. The workers must cut themselves adrift from the old system and the old parties, persons and notions. They must challenge every institution, question every authority, examine critically every creed, every conception, not excluding those which are popularly supposed to be eternal like ideas of right and wrong. They must give up their pathetic belief in the superiority of the ruling class and its institutions and consciously develop their own standards of conduct, remembering that the purpose and the conditions are the only final measure of their usefulness. It may be true, for instance, that in a broad sense the members of the capitalist class owing to their leisure and opportunities of culture have developed qualities very desirable from a social standpoint, but from the nature of the present situation these qualities sink for the workers into insignificance in comparison with the urgent need for self-assertion, the necessary precursor of emancipation. They must realise that there is, and can be, no improvement in the status of the workers, except at the expense of the other class, because it is the ownership of the

means of wealth production which is at stake. It follows therefore that every step will be contested fiercely by the present owners, with whom there can be no useful compromise. They must give up trusting to leaders who can do nothing for them, whether well intentioned or otherwise. They must aim at understanding the social system in which they live as a means to controlling the forces which at present overawe them. It may seem easier to follow the method of Queen Victoria, who surrounded herself with a host of odds and ends to hide the unwelcome facts of life, but it has the twofold objection that the forces of change went on working just the same, while Queen Victoria only succeeded in making herself a slave, toiling to perpetuate the myth she had created. H.

### MOONSHINE.

"Only under an individualistic system can we each enjoy the fullest liberty, and the public be well served."—Lord Leverhulme, "Reynolds," 1/4/1923.

Sounds plausible, if you are in the habit of shutting your eyes, opening your mouth—then swallowing. What is Liberty? We may see more clearly its relative meaning if we examine the composition of this somewhat mysterious body of people, "The Public." Who are they? Lord Leverhulme is one, the ex-Service mendicant is another, the strumpit of the wealthy idler with £20,000 worth of jewellery hung around her body, and the daughter of the underworld selling her sex for bread; the teeming millions of propertyless labour power sellers, and the small minority who own their means of livelihood; all are comprised within our Lord's ambiguity, "The Public." Stripped of its cant and examined in the light of reality, "serving the public" merely means that Leverhulme's trust, like any other capitalist concern, employs workers to produce wealth because the value of their total output exceeds in large proportion the value of the wages paid to those required to produce such wealth. Neither capitalists nor shareholders render any "service" in such production, they may depart to any part of the earth their pleasure takes them, and never see or know the source of their profits and dividends; all the operations necessary will proceed as per usual, carried on in every department by the workers. The master



class are only concerned with serving their own ends. They will destroy wealth or restrict its production if it enhances their profit, or employ you in the production of death dealing aeroplanes, bullets and poison gas (with which the workers have been "well served") for the same reason as Lord Sunlight, exploitation with the object of profit. To tell you, dependent as you are for your existence, upon those who own the earth and its resources, that you "enjoy the fullest liberty," is evidence of the contempt your masters have for you. The dictionary describes a slave as: "One whose person and services are wholly at the disposal and under the control of another" (Lloyds).

How fitting such a description is to the worker of to-day—and yet! he would be provoked to indignation at the appellation "slave," for he has no chains, he can go to his job in the morning (when he's got one to go to), and he can go home (!) at night; and when his master hasn't any further use for him, he can go to that nasty place the Christians tell us about. And this he calls "Liberty," not because he is a cynic, or has seen the grim humour of it all, but because his masters have taught him to believe it is the birthright of Britons, "who never, never, will be slaves." From the days of those Christian humbugs, the Liberal Cotton Lords, who fought against the introduction of the Factory Acts in order to retain the "Liberty" to work children to death, to the modern vampires of imperialistic exploitation, "Liberty" has ever been the cry of our rulers, 'tis but the cry for "Liberty" to exploit and plunder the workers. Clear your mental vision by a study of Socialism, then the verbiage of such as Leverhulme will be rated by you at its clap-trap worth. You cannot have "Liberty" within a system that enslaves you, neither can it be benevolently bestowed upon you. "Know ye this, who would be free must strike the blow." Mac.

### PADDINGTON.

Persons interested in the formation of a Branch in the above neighbourhood should communicate with—

A. E. DAVIES,  
23, Chilworth Mews, Paddington.

### SOCIALISATION OR NATIONALISATION.

What is it that makes us of the working class determine, in every-growing numbers, that the means of life shall not remain private property? It is bitter experience of the power which private ownership gives to a handful of men over the remaining millions of society—our class. Whether we shall work or not, and consequently whether we shall have enough to eat or not, depends on the requirements of the capitalist: and, being at work, we expect with certainty that at every opportunity our wages will be forced down, our hours extended, our pace sped up. If the capitalist pleads that he himself is in the grip of circumstances, that competition in the world market makes it necessary for him to dispense with men wherever possible, and get the utmost out of those who remain, we know that it is just *because* things are privately produced, with a view to sale, that this scramble for orders is possible.

Here are we, on the one hand, needing all manner of things to keep us alive and make life happy; here, on the other, are the land, the factories, the transport systems that could satisfy these needs. We could produce in such abundance that no one need go short. We *do* produce even now enough to give us all such a standard of life as no worker enjoys. Why aren't we getting it? Why are multitudes of us not working at all? Why do those who are in work live so meagrely? And how is it that such an enormous part of what we make goes to the upkeep of the masters, who did not work in its making?

We know why. We don't create goods out of nothing. We work upon raw materials, and they come from the earth, and the masters own it. We work with tools and machines in workshops; and the masters own them. Consequently, the products when they are finished belong to them too. The only condition on which we are permitted to work is that this product can be sold at a profit. A profit can only be made when the goods fetch a price which will pay wages and leave a margin for the employer. In order to compete with his rivals, the capitalist will always try to fix his price below theirs; and since he is naturally unwilling to reduce his rate of profit, he will always reduce costs when he can.

This, as it affects the worker, means less being paid in wages, and more being exacted for it. The miners know this; the dockers know it; the builders, engineers, woodworkers, farm-labourers—is there any section of the proletariat that does not know it? And the resolve grows to take those things that are indispensable to the life of the community out of private hands, and make them the common property of the workers.

That done, the task of supplying food for the hungry, or houses for the homeless, will have become relatively simple. Are clothes needed? The tailors will make them to the quantity required and in such varied styles as are in demand at the time; and when they are finished, those who need new clothes can have them. Some will go to miners, who are producing coal to the necessary amount; some to teachers, who are carrying out the educational design of the new society. And so on. The details do not matter. Many means will suggest themselves by which each worker, having performed his share of the necessary labour, could be enabled to receive what he needed from the common store. There might be depôts, similar to shops, where people would present their tokens of labour performed, and make their choice of goods. If so, the actual machinery for distributing goods would not differ greatly from that of to-day: the difference—the revolution—will be in the basis of production. The goods which are made will be made for the direct and sole purpose of satisfying the needs of the makers. Society will have organised itself for co-operative production. No room in that day for any who will not work, unless they are feeble, or children: it will be the day of the workers, taking possession of and controlling the vast instruments of wealth production which all this time we have operated for the benefit of the masters.

The particular working out of each part of the plan will no doubt be best done by the workers concerned in our farms, factories, ports, and so on, as the case may be. In its general outlines, the scheme of production can be shaped by the general legislative assembly, elected, as it will be, by workers, for the supreme purpose of co-ordinating all the varied activities of social life. This new character of the legislative assembly will be the reflection of the new character of society—a community of

workers with full ownership of their means of livelihood; just as the State of to-day (the name by which we speak of the whole machinery of government, armed and policed) reflects the character of present-day society—the juxtaposition of two broad classes, one propertied, to be defended, the other propertyless, to be repressed. When the means of life are socially owned, the State, which grew up with private property, will give way to something better.

Such is the process of Socialisation, towards which the proletariat, losing the last of its patience with capitalism, is moving. Its two salient features are:—

(1) The taking over of the means of production by the workers. Not "buying out." That the capitalist has been able to exploit us so long is no reason why he should be allowed to continue. In whatever form he might be paid, to buy him out would mean the perpetuation of an idle class whom the workers must labour to keep.

(2) Direct control by the workers, all officials being elected, responsible to those who elected them, and capable of being recalled if they prove inefficient or unscrupulous. Needless to say, to the capitalist this means the world turned upside-down. That they whose wealth poured in while they remained idle, who never, in many cases, knew the first thing about the undertakings that made them rich, should suddenly have to go to work, that were surely wild enough. But that, when they are at work, instead of being ordered and driven by taskmasters appointed from above, and rewarded at the end with a fraction of the value they produce, they should be able to decide by vote their working conditions, elect their officials, and have their needs richly satisfied, that is very midsummer madness! To the revolutionary worker it is a sane and obvious thing: the righting of a world which is already upside-down.

There remains a way to side-track the movement towards revolution, and it is seized upon by very varied supporters of the present system—not least by people who, though they know well what the workers can and ought to do, shrink through timidity or self-interest from the inevitable decisive act.

"Nationalisation" is the cry. "Let us have no fundamental re-organisation of society! Let the bourgeoisie remain. Let the State remain. Pay compensation to the



present owners of the means of production, and transfer these things to the possession of the State. What is all this about democratic control? You vote once in every few years, to decide who shall govern you: you can continue to do so. What more do you want? The British Post Office is a State enterprise of this kind: the Belgian railways are another. Admirable things!" And the British postal workers, and the Belgian railwaymen, who recently attested by a strike the satisfactoriness of nationalisation from their point of view, can tell how very admirable they are.

No, the time has gone for both the private ownership and the public ownership and bureaucratic control of industry. It is only on the basis of *common ownership* and direct democratic control that we can build the free and comradely life for which we have waited too long

A.

### BREAD AND BRAINS.

There is a great deal of truth in the saying that man believes what he wants to believe. This is merely another way of stating a scientific axiom that man in his beliefs adopts that which affords him the greatest satisfaction with the minimum of effort. In the matter of his thinking, man, in the majority of cases, takes the line of least resistance.

The development of human mentality is precisely similar to that of the animal kingdom as a whole. The position occupied at present by the animal kingdom (including man, of course) is the outcome of countless experiences and resulting variations in the past, the elimination by death of those who failed to fit themselves to their environment, and the survival of those who, through heredity, became possessed of what has come to be called "survival value."

So that when we speak of a man's "intellect" we are referring to something which is the result of the existence in his past of many connections, some of which were dropped, others which persisted.

In modern times however, this "survival value," on the mental side, is to some extent inoperative. Since man entered the phase of history known as wage-slavery, most of his thinking has been done for him. Since the greater part of his life consists of food getting and food distributing, a great part of his sense impressions will be

derived from these activities, and what little thinking he does of a serious nature will be correspondingly coloured. In other words, his economic conditions will determine what he shall think.

It might be urged that the present economic condition would tend to enlighten him as to his slave position and thus bring about class-consciousness. So it does, in some cases, by its very nature; but in the majority of cases, owing to the precautionary measures taken, no serious attempt at interpretation is made. Generally speaking, the mind of man has become so accustomed to acquiescence in the belief of the necessity for obedience, that it can hardly grasp the notion of freedom as being something apart from this condition.

This conception of obedience is by no means inherent—it is a product of an environment of years of slavery acting upon an organism amenable to its influence.

There are those who, quick to recognise this "failing" (in others), dispose themselves to take the fullest advantage of it. Especially is this so where some material interest is served, such as on the field of religion, or in the schools, and in various centres of "ethical" teaching, where the resulting product is a decided asset to a system where one class is enslaved by another. Except in those cases where they are hired out for use against their own class, a worker or his children found possessing brains above a certain (low) standard is considered an impertinence. Where found, methods of adulteration are resorted to; failing this, pressure is applied to prevent contagion.

In a wage-slave society it is important that the system shall appear to have the sanction of the slaves themselves. To this end all "education" is directed. Any institution that has for its object the regulation of man's thoughts must be under the control of the slave owners. The result is that the largest part of the mental food assimilated by man to-day is that provided by his master. By this means acquiescence has been secured.

An important contributing factor to this condition of mind is that "engine of progress"—as it is euphemistically termed—the Press. By this means people may be reached who are otherwise difficult of access.

It may have been noticed by some that the papers very often contain columns of matter that can only be described as silly, and one has no doubt often wondered what the inducement could have been to publish it. As a matter of fact, the "silly" stuff is deliberately utilised for one purpose, and one purpose only—that of distracting the attention of a mass of people from things disquieting. For it must not be forgotten that the powerful instrument known as the Daily Press is, in every instance, in this country at any rate, in the hands of the ruling class or its supporters. No matter which we take up, or whatever we read, it represents, at bottom, only just what the ruling class wants us to know. They have their writers, men who are proficient in all branches of knowledge, who render their services as required, even to writing the silly stuff, the importance of which—to the capitalists—is seen when we learn that, as a feature, it has not only been retained, but considerably extended.

Human mentality appears to be well understood. Acting on the "line-of-least-resistance" theory, they usually prepare their matter in a form easiest to assimilate—that is, of course, when they wish something to be particularly effective. It may be political news, the doings of this or that person, or even ordinary news items; no matter what the subject is, it is handled and presented in such a way as is determined by just how much they think we ought to know, and the depth of impression desired. At other times, and for quite different reasons, but acting on the same principle, they may make it so difficult to understand that the average man or woman will not subject their mental powers to the task. The main thing appears to be to prevent people thinking too long about any one thing. "Variety is the spice of life"—and they get it! Apparently the mass of people, whose attention in these days is lamentably undisciplined, will accept any convenient notion offered to it. If the purveyors of the people's mental food are convinced that food served raw might prove unpalatable or indigestible—well, then, they will cook it, and flavour it to any required degree. In other words, where precise information is dangerous, or falls short, imagination and false testimony is employed.

Again. Prominence is always given to

the utterances of those whose business it is to misrepresent or vilify anything which tends to enlighten the mass of people as to the true position they occupy in life, and to a true understanding of the huge swindle of which they are the victims at the hands of those who at present own and control. Needless to say, a speech by a Socialist is never seen mentioned, which goes to show that impartiality is not the aim of the Press. If Socialism was wrong it would be self-evident; if the capitalist was right there would be no doubt about it, and the claims of the Socialists would be superfluous. But the Press takes no chances, because it *knows*!

TOM SALA.

## Economic Class.

The Economic Class at Head Office will commence on the 20th of this month. Will all those interested endeavour to attend the first meeting so that the evening most suitable can be selected for the weekly meeting of the class.

### £1,000 FUND.

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A.S.C./116/24:8:23

### NEW YORK.

Readers of THE SOCIALIST STANDARD interested in Socialist Educational Work may communicate with

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All communications for the Executive Committee, Subscriptions for the SOCIALIST STANDARD, Articles, and Correspondence submitted for insertion therein, should be addressed—The Socialist Party of Great Britain, 17, Mount Pleasant, London, W.C.1, to whom Money Orders should be made payable. The meetings of the Executive Committee are held at the Head Office, every Tuesday, at 7.30 p.m.

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**The Socialist Standard,**

SEPT.



1923

**IDEALS AND REALITY.**

In the July number we criticised the Co-operative Movement, pointing out that this movement would not assist the workers to break the chains of slavery.

We have recently received striking confirmation of our contention that the Co-operative Movement must either carry on business in accordance with capitalist methods or stagnate.

From the *Co-operative News* (18/8/23) we learn that the Committee of the Rochdale Provident Society have decided to discharge thirty-seven adult employees and replace them with fifteen juveniles. They were taking this action on grounds of economy.

In their comment upon this action the *Co-operative News* quotes from the *Daily Mail* the views of Mr. H. Gladwell, the president of the Rochdale society, as follows:—

“To keep our Society in its present sound financial position we have to attract trade. This will only come if our goods are cheap and dividends are big; for the co-operator to-day does not care a rap about co-operative ideals. He or she is simply concerned about cheap commodities. To sell cheaply we have to adjust our wage costs. For the past two years we have been paying men big wages to do boys' work, and we cannot continue on those lines.”

Here is an open admission of failure from a Co-operative official, and it is not minimised by the fact that the *Co-operative*

*News* adds a note stating, “The Society has been, but is not now, a member of the Co-operative Union.”

A member of the Co-operative Union—in fact, the President of the 1912 Congress—made the following statement in his inaugural address to the Congress:—

“We find a growing disposition on the part of the rank and file to take advantage of methods of trading which, but a few years ago, were regarded as distinctly anti-co-operative. The sale of bonus tea and overweight margarine, when first introduced by the competitive trade, was heartily condemned, alike on our platforms and in our stores, but both are now common enough features of co-operative trading, especially in the North of England, and the practice is carried on by many who condemn it on principle, for the sake of the commercial success it brings. The coupon system of trading, with its so-called ‘present’ at the end, is coming along, and one wonders how long it may be before, instead of adhering to our own ideals, we shall be not only copying the doubtful methods of others, but introducing new ones ourselves, and sacrificing every principle on the altar of commercial success.” (Page 29, 44th Annual Congress Report.)

Unfortunately for the idealistic Co-operator, it is a world of realities and not ideals that has to be dealt with. Capitalism has possession of this world at present, and hallmarks productions with the capitalist stamp as products of slave labour. Though such products may be produced by a Co-operative Society and sold in a Co-operative shop, still they are none the less articles produced by people who own no property but their power to labour, and who have used up this power to labour in the production of Co-operative products. In return for this expenditure of energy they have received no more than in any other capitalist concern—the average cost of production of such labour power. In other words, whether the work is done for a Co-operative Society or a joint stock company, the worker is still a wage slave, whatever be the fanciful title applied to his wage.

As we are organised to abolish wage-slavery, we are opposed to the Co-operative Movement.

[Since the above was written we find that a writer in the *Co-operative News* has fallen out with some of the views put forward in our July article. We will have pleasure in drying our critics tears, correcting his inaccuracies, pointing out his shufflings, and demolishing his case in a future issue. We are a very obliging party.]

**COMMODITIES AND QUIDS.**

May 18th, 1923.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain,  
17, Mount Pleasant, London, W.C.1.

Dear Comrade,

J. F., in his further reply to me, says that I appear to have muddled myself by dragging in the question of circulation. But appearances are deceptive, and if we are to understand whether a sovereign is a commodity or not, we must analyse it in its relation with other things. It is quite obvious to anyone who has read Marx that every special commodity when once exchanged, and put into use, is no longer a commodity, but a simple use-value, which loses all its necromancy at that stage. But the general commodity is different from the special, inasmuch as it stays within the sphere of circulation to perform one of its principal functions, namely, alienating other commodities. So we can truly say that when the machine begins to function it is no longer a commodity; but that the sovereign is a commodity as long as it functions: a very important difference.

The next point is, we agree with J. F. that in our analysis of the sovereign we must not attempt to alter it one iota, but must try and find out if it is a commodity after it comes from the mint, and is functioning as the general equivalent (commodity) in Great Britain. J. F. says:—

“But the sovereign is not produced for sale or profit, but as an article of utility in certain social transactions. It is being consumed in use while acting thus, and is not a commodity.”

It is clear that gold as the “specific commodity” takes up the form of sovereigns in the United Kingdom, and it is in that form that gold reflects value, and is a standard of price. One of its functions is to purchase other commodities, but alas in doing so it sells itself, and keeps on doing so as long as it functions, and at the same time wears away on the counters of a hard world. So soon as it loses one-third of a grain of its weight it is no longer legal tender; which is equal to saying that it is no longer a sovereign, but only a symbol of itself. But we are not here dealing with symbols, but with real sovereigns. We will keep tenaciously to the position laid down by J. F., but we will see to it that he also observes it. So long, then, as a sovereign

functions it not only circulates other commodities, but exchanges itself for them, and is itself a commodity as long as it does so, and that is as far as we are interested in it in this discussion. So J. F. is wrong in his first proposition, and we have reconciled his last one by explaining it.

Regarding profit. It is quite true to say that commodities to-day contain surplus-value, but the fact must be clearly understood that we can have commodity production without producing surplus-value, but that we cannot have surplus-value without commodity production. For example, the slave and the serf could produce commodities and values, but they could not produce surplus-value. The automatic machine can produce commodities, but it cannot beget value, nor surplus-value. The small tradesman who owns his own means of production and is his own labour-power, can produce commodities and values, but he cannot produce surplus-value. Indeed, surplus-value is not necessarily a corollary of commodity production at all; although it is in capitalistic production, for it is the nature of capital to beget surplus-value; and this only occurs with the advent of the free labourer. Money and commodities are no new things, and surplus-value is modern and new compared with them. In other words, the nature of commodities never changes, although their forms are continually changing. I contend that I have shown that J. F.'s propositions are unsound.

Finally, I ask again J. F. to give us the law whereby we can distinguish commodity wealth from wealth in general; for it is true to say that no one can tell who is right in this discussion unless he understands the law. Further, it is the teacher's duty to explain the law. But if J. F. does so, he will at the same moment show how untenable his position is; and he would be forced, as an honest man, to come to the same conclusion as Marx, viz., that gold is the commodity par excellence, and the form that it takes up in Britain is the sovereign.

Yours fraternally,

WM. WALKER.

**ANSWER TO W. W.**

W. W.'s letter adds further evidence that he is confused on the question under discussion. This is most clearly shown in his concluding paragraph, where he quotes



Marx as saying "that gold is the commodity par excellence"; and then W. W. continues, "And the form it takes up in Britain is the sovereign." The implication, whether wilful or accidental, is that the latter statement belongs also to Marx. This, of course, is false. Nowhere does Marx state that the sovereign (or the ducat, or napoleon, or any other national coin) is the general equivalent or universal commodity. Marx always shows that it is gold as a metal, as a particular substance, that performs that function.

As we have explained before, the sovereign is a piece of gold—but a piece of gold, shaped, weighed and stamped for specific social uses and restricted in ways quite unknown to commodities. One may purchase gold and melt it down for any purpose, but one must not—legally—melt down sovereigns. One may shape gold into ornaments, but one must not interfere with the sovereign for any such purpose. In other words, the law does not—in general—interfere with anyone buying and using gold for any purpose, but it sternly forbids any such action with sovereigns. Moreover, the sovereign performs functions—such as legal tender in payment of debt—that no commodity can fulfil.

Outside of Britain the sovereign loses these various characteristics and becomes a mere piece of gold, which exchanges by weight, and is therefore no longer a sovereign. It is this simple fact that W. W. has failed to understand. His confusion is further shown by his misuse of words in fairly common use, as when he asks for the "law" whereby we distinguish commodity wealth from wealth in general. The use of the word "law" in this connection is nonsense. Twice previously we have defined a "commodity" for him, and as he neither questions nor shows our definition as being in error, one can only wonder why the question is repeated, even though it is done in a nonsensical form.

W. W.'s remarks on surplus value are absurdly incorrect. If the slave and serf could not produce surplus value how were their masters able to revel in huge luxury? Not only did this occur under chattel slavery and feudalism, but in certain transition periods later both slave and serf were used to produce surplus values for capitalists, as in cotton growing in South America and gold production on the Rand. J. F.

## WAR—THE SOCIALIST POSITION.

A Conservative M.P., writing to the *Daily Herald* a few weeks ago, remarked that while his Party had always been friendly to France, the Liberals and the Socialists have always been pro-German. Both statements are inaccurate. The Conservatives, if they have been consistently anything, have been friendly to the French capitalist class. They have certainly never helped the French workers to throw off capitalist rule. On the other hand, the Liberals and the present wearers of the mantle of dead Liberalism—the Labour Party—in line with the interests they represented, have tended rather to favour other sections of the ruling class.

We Socialists, however, have always and everywhere been pro-working class and nothing else.

We are internationalists, and our slogan is "The World for the Workers"; not for the British or for the white races, but simply for the workers.

This is because we see that the problems which worry us are the problems which worry all of the workers whatever differences of nationality or colour there may be between those in one continent and those in another. Although our rulers may quarrel among themselves and wish to drag us into their wars, there is something which binds them together against us and us against them. They are the owners and controllers of our means of life. Whether we plough wheat-lands in Norfolk or the Argentine, sow rice in India, load ships or stoke them, work in steel mills or cotton factories, drive trains or motors, or work in offices in the new world or the old, we are all subject to one uniform circumstance. We may not use this vast machinery for producing wealth without the permission, and on the terms of the owners. You may not like the word, but you cannot escape the fact that we are slaves to the people who at present own these things. We have to yield up to them as rent, interest, or profit a large part of the wealth we have produced. We yield it, not because they work, or direct, or do any useful service, but merely because they own.

The working class does not own the natural resources of wealth, yet within its ranks are all those who perform the essential services which turn that natural wealth

to good account. Our fight, then, is against the owning, but no longer useful, class; and it is a fight which crosses national boundaries. We are not sentimentalists, and we do not waste ourselves in pious enthusiasm about the brotherhood of the human race; but the Paris Commune and the Bolshevik upheaval teach us, if teaching is needed, that the capitalist class will act as one wherever the need arises to crush any sectional revolt. The emotional warmth of Biblical pacifism may have been a useful inspiration to the Free Traders of the nineteenth century who were looking for markets for the products of English industry, but it is as rotten a basis for international working-class action as is hating blindly the members of the ruling class, which passes for Socialism in certain circles.

Our internationalism rests on a firmer foundation—the sure knowledge that national sections of the working class stand or fall together. The development of capitalist trade has made the world one huge market of which no part can now stand isolated. Purchasers buy in the cheapest market, not only goods, but also labour-power. Producers must produce for one market also. Russian peasants, Canadian prairie farmers, and English corn growers all must produce an article which is offered for sale on the same market. Workers have tried, and may still try, to stand in with their own rulers in raising barriers against the rest of the world. Facts will, however, be too strong for them. The Australian and Canadian Labour Parties may urge the exclusion of coloured workers in order to protect the white standard of living, and they may succeed in keeping them out while the capitalists for political reasons favour this. But the Australian standard of living falls just the same. Cheap labour in China is just as effective in undermining the white standard as it would be in Australia itself. South African white workers who chose to fight their employers and the coloured workers as well, instead of organising the latter, suffered a disastrous defeat. Our own Labour Party may demand that no Chinese sailors shall be employed on British ships west of Suez, but even should this become law, it will not protect English sailors against the cheaper transport of foreign shipowners, and British shipowners might then elect to register under foreign flags.

The American Government has put increasing restrictions year by year on immigration from low-paid European countries, but the American standard of living has fallen, in spite of this, by 25 per cent. in the last 24 years. The powerful owners of the steel industry have fought hard against these restrictions because they had need of thousands of unskilled labourers and they knew that it is easier to keep men disorganised who do not speak each other's language; but other capitalist forces, backed by misguided English-speaking workers, proved stronger still. Bankers and financial corporations with capital to invest were not tied to American soil. They can, and do, engage in the exploitation of this cheaper labour in its home country. The American worker has succeeded in barring foreign members of his own class, but he has suffered in just the same way as he would have suffered from the direct competition for jobs in U.S.A. itself.

This is sufficient illustration of the necessity for the workers to organise and act on class lines in the task of maintaining their present standards, but there is the further problem presented by war between nations. Let us consider how war arises.

We can first reject as irrelevant the foolish Jingo notion that human nature is essentially warlike, and the equally foolish pacifist notion that it is peacefully inclined. Man's nature is just what conditions make it, and there are no naturally militarist races. In times when, and places where, geographical, climatic, or historical conditions put a nation in the position of having to fight for its existence, that nation will inevitably attempt to cultivate the required fighting qualities. If it fails it will become a subject race, and may or may not continue the struggle for independence. If it wins so overwhelmingly that all danger is removed and there exists no further incentive to warfare, then the lesson of history is that the military prowess will decline. As succeeding waves of Barbarians swept westwards over the outlying parts of the Roman Empire, and finally over the Empire itself, invariably each body of warrior tribes settled under the influence of the defeated civilisation and became themselves the helpless victims of new onslaughts. What better illustration could be given than that of England's own history?

Modern wars have their cause ultimately



in economic rivalries, and are the unavoidable accompaniment of decaying capitalist civilisation. It is not suggested that tradition, religious beliefs, and racial hostility do not play their part, but these tend more and more to become mere auxiliaries to the main forces—means to the ends of our politicians, and excuses rather than causes.

While individual competition gives way rapidly to trusts and combines, the competition of national groups grows ever fiercer and more vital to the existence of capitalist States. Sources of raw materials, coal and iron, cotton and oil; means of transport and communication; and markets for finished products—these are the things about which wars are waged to-day. Great Britain did not want a square inch of territory, but she came out of the war with 1,500,000 square miles rich in minerals and of great strategic value. France wanted security and the return of her beloved children in Alsace-Lorraine (whom, by the way, she gave to Germany in 1871 in return for assistance in murdering some 20,000 of her other beloved children in rebellious Paris), but she is much more interested in the coal and iron industries of the Saar and Ruhr valleys. Germany and Poland are splitting hairs about the nationality of the Silesians, but everyone knows it is coal, and not people, that they wish to stamp as German or Polish.

We must concede, too, that there is always the possibility of crises in which the solution of these economic problems by the capitalists will be by the appeal to arms. The capitalist world is a world of buying and selling, dedicated to Lord Trade Almighty, and only those who have access to cheap raw materials and security for disposing of their products can hope to survive.

War therefore may come at any time unless the workers abolish capitalism, but if it comes, what should they do?

The Labour Party has given an answer—one which is in keeping with its disgraceful record of persistent treachery to the working class. Before 1914 it helped its Liberal allies to prepare the army and navy for war. In 1914 it lent its aid and the name of Socialism to the task of persuading and dragooning you into the army of the capitalist State to defend their class interests. Since the war it has barely finished advocating "making Germany pay" and

"making Russia pay," when it now takes up the new capitalist cry of making France pay, and gives its endorsement in your name to Baldwin's foreign policy. It defended its 1914 treachery by denouncing its German pseudo-Socialist counterparts for voting war credits, yet never before, during, or since the war has the Labour Party made the stand of voting directly against naval, military, or air force estimates in the House of Commons. At its Annual Conference, 1923, it turned down by 2,924,000 votes to 808,000 (*Daily Herald*, June 30th), a motion instructing its members to do so. It would, as Mr. Brownlie said, "embarrass candidates at future elections," and it would put his members out of work who were engaged in battleship building. (He forgot to mention that the next war, being largely on the civilian population, would be good for undertakers.) Mr. Henderson settled the matter by saying it was "absurd," and that we must have means of defence against France. The S.D.F., more candid in its willingness to help our masters out of their difficulties, decided at their Conference to revive their old demand for a conscript citizen army for "defence only" (*Daily Herald*, August 7th, 1923).

That last is at the kernel of the whole matter. Defending *what*, or defending *whom*? What have you got that needs defending against France? Will the French capitalists take away the million or so houses that the capitalist system cannot build for you, or the hutches in which most of you live? Will they take away the 25s. a week that Norfolk labourers are starving on, or the dole from the unemployed?

No. As workers you have nothing to defend except your lives, and war merely means the exchange of the half-life of capitalist industrialism for nearly certain death. The French or the Germans or the Japs can only take away one brand of slavery and give you another in exchange, as like it as makes no odds. Do you think they care a damn about you or your few sticks of furniture? It is your labour-power they are interested in, and they will employ you or leave you unemployed just as your present masters do. If it pays them to do so, they will give you a few illusory plums like old age pensions or nationalisation, and if it does not pay them, they will not do so. Does the British or any other Government ever act on a different plane from this?

If you had anything in the country you call yours, what makes you emigrate by the hundred thousand? You are workers, and you live when and where you can get a job. Whether the employer is a Jew or a Gentile, white or black, French or British, the Postmaster-General or a Labour Government, does not matter one jot. They will employ you as they think fit, and they will, if you kick or lay hands on capitalist property, use their armed forces to shoot you down.

Those armed forces are used in peace or war to protect something which you as workers do not possess—that is, property. To protect it against you! The French capitalist class may, at no distant date, decide to go to war with their dearly beloved late allies, in order to filch some of their possessions. If they do, let them. As workers you have before you one remedy only; sometime, sooner or later, you will be compelled by the pressure of economic forces to set yourselves to this remedy. You will have to decide to seize from the capitalist class the means of producing wealth in the use of which they no longer take part, and use it as common property for the satisfaction of the needs of society. Until you do that, all your struggles will be in vain. If in the meantime one section of the capitalist class, the section which is primarily interested in exploiting you, asks you to defend its wealth against another section, act in accordance with the interests of your class, and let them fight their own battles.

Join us in our struggle for Socialism against them and their apologists and defenders.

H.

### LEEDS AND DISTRICT.

Will those interested in the formation of a Branch in the above area communicate with

E. Boden,

5, East Parade,

Harrowgate.

Readers who find it difficult or impossible to obtain the SOCIALIST STANDARD through the usual channels should communicate with the Head Office, 17, Mount Pleasant, W.C.I., when regular delivery will be arranged.

### NOTES.

To appreciate properly the wonderful genius of the Capitalist, it is useful to peruse the pages of the "Directory of Directors." According to the "Daily News" (8/6/23):

"The book shows that many individuals hold numerous directorial appointments, and probably the most notable of these is the 60 directorships held by Mr. H. S. Berry, while Mr. Edmund Davies appears on the board of 52 companies, and the Viscountess Rhondda on 33 companies."

Imagine the marvellous ability of the man or woman who can do dozens of jobs at the one moment! The capitalists have evidently solved the problem of being in 30 or 40 places at the same time.

Seriously, however, this should convince any worker, who will give the matter a few moments' thought, of the fact that the capitalists are not necessary to, and take no part in, industry. How can a man do any work of importance when his activities are split up over 40 or 50 concerns, and these concerns of immense size? Their figuring as directors merely consists of possibly attending a board meeting once in a few months for the purpose of hearing a report read of the activities of those who actually do take part in the work of the different concerns.

\* \* \* \*

The "spiritualism" of the Church rests upon a very ordinary economic basis, in spite of the desire of "idealists" to raise it above the mundane. For example, the Church finds it cannot flourish without funds, and that to get funds it must adopt the commercial traveller methods of the ordinary business concern.

In order to stir up the getting of funds a book has been issued setting out the line religious collectors should adopt. It is entitled "Efficient Church Finance." Here are one or two extracts from it:

"Our ability to read character and our instinct for touching the right spot may enable us to secure unlimited favourable attention at once."

"Try to sense his viewpoint; begin talking along lines in which he is quite agreed."

Emphasise the more spiritual side of the "Weekly Freewill Offering. Tell of the Spiritual Uplift."

That last point is the clincher! Imagine the "spiritual uplift" attached to your "mouldy coppers"!

GILMAC.



### TO A NEW READER.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain is now in its twentieth year. This may or may not seem a long time. Measured by the life of a man, it is a considerable slice; compared with the life of mankind, it is but a minute. During our twenty years of existence as a party we have had but one essential thing to say; all else has been by the way. Briefly (and yet once more) it is this.

You are poor. You are poor because you are robbed. You are robbed because you are slaves—hired slaves or wage slaves. You are slaves because you own nothing but your power to labour, and must therefore hire your labour-power to those who own the means of livelihood. These are the masters. Owning your means of life, they can lay down the terms upon which they will hire you. Their terms are, that in return for the hire of your labour-power they will give a sufficient sum to enable you to support life and reproduce your kind. This sum is called wages, and the system based upon wage labour is called capitalism. At different times in history the wage slaves have revolted at the hardships of their condition. Hitherto they have always been beaten, either by starvation or brute force, although sometimes a little amelioration or palliative has been thrown to them. These have had some temporary value and, in the case of the granting of the vote, a tremendous possibility. But as the workers have never yet been inspired with anything beyond the immediate need, they remain slaves. That is the important thing to remember—they remain slaves.

Now, the Socialist case is this. There is no need for anyone to be poor. There is no need for anyone to be robbed. There is no need for slavery in any form. The workers are held in subjection by the armed forces of the nation. The control of those forces is vested in Parliament, and Parliament is composed of men who have been elected there by the votes of the workers. The workers must revolt once more, but it must be a conscious, intelligent revolt this time. It must be aimed, not at some trumpery ephemeral object, or the securing of some little easing of their slavery. They must, by means of their votes, capture Parliament and the control of the armed forces. They must then proceed to reconstruct society. Instead of the product of the

nation's toil being divided among the handful of immensely rich who own the means of wealth-making, each member of the community would receive according to his need. The colossal waste of capitalist society; its competition; its advertising; its over-production; its under-employment; its petty industry; its production of shoddy, and so forth, would be eliminated, and human effort would yield enough for a high level of comfort for all.

We differ from all other alleged working-class parties chiefly in this, that we say the achievement of Socialism is so immediate and so urgent that it dwarfs everything else. We say that if all the effort now diverted to the gaining of some momentary object were concentrated upon getting Socialism, our goal would be in sight. Think of the dozens of "aims" which have possessed the Labour Party and the I.L.P. since their formation. Old Age Pensions, State Insurance, Eight-Hours Day, Single Tax, Free Trade, Votes for Women, etc., etc. "Aims" so "revolutionary" that either capitalist party can select any one of these aims and pass them on the Statute Book without blinking. And when they are passed, are the working class any better off? They are still slaves. Assuming they got their latest demand—the Capital Levy—where would it leave the workers? Still slaves.

Another so-called workers' party, the S.D.F., which changed its name to the S.D.P., and then again to the B.S.P., and then split up into the N.S.S. and B.S.P., and then somehow changed back to the S.D.F. again—this chameleon-like party thinks the greatest thing we can have at the moment would be a citizen army!

One other claimant to the title of a workers' party is the Communist Party, and we have dealt with them so often, that it seems like labouring the point to devote further space to them. But a new reader may like to know that their object is the same as the Labour Party's; they have tried desperately hard to affiliate with them; they have helped them at elections; and in Parliament they are anxious to assume the Labour Party's harness, through the latter's whips. Their difference from the Labour Party is quite minor, and mainly confined to methods. The quickest way to rouse the workers from their apathy is to make a noise, they say. The bigger the noise, the

bigger the crowd. Having got the crowd, lead them. Never mind where, at the moment, but gradually the crowd will instinctively turn to you as their natural leaders. Then, when capitalism's great crisis occurs, take your place at the head of the mob and lead them, the half-baked, the wholly-baked, and the three-parts-baked, on to the conquest of society and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Such is the essence of the Communist Party's outlook.

We prefer that the workers should know where they are going; should be conscious every step of the way. This process is slower. Noise and firework have no place in it. We expect no huge, wild influx of members, immediately followed by similar slumps. We expect a steady growth composed of those who realise their servile position in society; who can see how it has historically come about; and, above all, those who can see that the only way to end servility is for the workers to gain political control, so that society may be run for the benefit of the whole of its members, and not, as at present, for a few. If any of those who read these lines would like to take the first logical step to their emancipation, and are convinced of the soundness of our position, we cordially invite them to apply for membership of our Party.

W. T. H.

### WORK.

We are told we do not work hard enough nor long enough.

Unemployment, and the evils resulting from it, are said to be due to the fact that the workers will not work. Stagnation in business is supposed to be due to the workers' dislike for work. This is the piffle continually coming from the master class and their agents. Facts, however, prove the contrary to be true. The more we work, the greater our poverty becomes; the more we work, the greater the wealth of the master class becomes. We look back into the past history of society and see that there was a time when the people were only able to produce sufficient for their subsistence; thus it was essential that all should work.

As recently as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there was no such thing as unemployment through lack of work. Yet, in the days of feudalism, feudal slaves did not work so hard as wage slaves do to-day.

Although working less, the people were better off; in recent times, though the workers work harder, poverty and its resultant evils have become greater. If we do not work hard, society would be short of the necessities of life, 'tis said; but we know that food, clothing, shelter, and luxuries exist in great abundance.

The problem which the capitalist class cannot solve is how to dispose of the whole of the vast amount of goods produced. Factories, warehouses, stores, and shops are crowded with goods, and until these are sold, more will not be wanted. These goods can be bought with money only; money can be obtained by the workers only through working. Goods unsold mean no work for many; no work means no money. This state of affairs is brought about by over-production, which proves that the workers have been working too much. But the irony of the position is that the workers, who have produced this vast wealth, are denied access to it. Why? Because it belongs to the capitalists. How have the latter gained control of this wealth? By robbing the producers. By this means the capitalist class have become the private owners of the means of living, i.e., factories, land, railways, etc., and they have made laws and raised armed forces to protect their property from the attacks of the workers.

Now, workers, you have the power to alter all this; you have the power to make life well worth living, by gaining control of the means of living. You have this power because the numbers of the working class far exceed those of the capitalist class. Riots, strikes, and bloody revolutions of the past have not given workers control of the means of living. To-day, these methods are still useless. But we have one method which is a sure method—the vote. To be able to use the vote to advantage requires knowledge. Workers, study Socialism, fight for Socialism, and bring about the Socialist Commonwealth which will free you from your chains and give a full and happy life to all.

E. W. C.

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**SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****BRANCH DIRECTORY.**

**BATTERSEA.**—Communications to A. Jones, 3 Matthew-st., Letchmere Estate, Battersea, S.W. Branch meets Mondays, 8.30, at 16 Creek-st., York-rd.

**BIRMINGHAM.**—Communications to L. Vinetsky, 11 Upper Dean-st., Birmingham. Branch meets A.E.U. Institute, Spiceal-st., every Saturday.

**CENTRAL.**—Membership obtained only through the Ex. Committee. Applications to General Sec.

**DEPTFORD.**—Sec., J. Veasey, 24, Marlton-st., E. Greenwich, S.E. 10. Branch meets 1st and 3rd Wednesdays in month, at 8 o'clock, at 435, New Cross-rd., S.E. Discussion after Branch business. Public invited.

**EAST LONDON.**—Communications to A. Jacobs, Sec., 78 Eric-st., Mile-end, E.3. Branch meets first and third Mondays in month at 141 Bow-rd.

**EDINBURGH.**—Communications to Andrew Porter, 12a, Kings-rd., Portobello.

**HACKNEY.**—Communications to the Sec., 78 Greenwood-rd., E.8. Branch meets Fridays, 7.30, at The Arcadians, 42, Amburst-rd., Hackney Stn.

**HANLEY.**—Branch meets Mondays, Working Men's Club, Glass-st. Communications to Sec., T. Travis, 27, Arthur Street, Cobridge, Staffs.

**ISLINGTON.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8.30, at 144 Seven Sisters-rd., Holloway, N. Communications to W. Baker, 35 Alma-st., Kentish Town, N.W.

**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.**—Communications to Sec., J. Bird, 5 Wellington-avenue, Westcliffe-on-Sea.

**TOOTING.**—Communications to Sec., 3, Lyveden-rd., Tooting, S.W.17. Branch meets Fridays, at Parochial Hall, Church-lane, Tooting, at 8 p.m.

**TOTTENHAM.**—Sec., G. Boyden, 11, Somerset road, Upper Edmonton. Branch meets Fridays, The Trades Hall, 7, Bruce-grove, Tottenham. Discussion after branch business. Public invited.

**WALTHAMSTOW.**—Communications to A. J. Godfrey, 30, Waverley road, Walthamstow, E.17. Branch meets at Workmen's Hall, High-st., every Monday.

**WATFORD.**—A. Lawson, Sec., 107 Kensington-avenue, Watford.

**WEST HAM.**—Branch meets Thursdays at 8 p.m. at 167 Romford rd., Stratford. Communications to P. Hallard, 22 Colegrave-rd., Stratford, E.

**WOOD GREEN.**—Branch meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month at 8 p.m., at Alexandra School, N.22.

**S.P.G.B. PROPAGANDA MEETINGS****LONDON DISTRICT.****Sundays:**

Finsbury Park, 6 p.m.  
Clapham Common, 6 p.m.  
Tottenham, West Green Corner, 7.30 p.m.  
Victoria Park, 3.30 p.m.  
Walthamstow, Church Hill, 7.30 p.m.

**Mondays:**

Highbury Corner, 8.30 p.m.

**Thursdays:**

Dalston, Queen's Road, 8.30 p.m.

**Friday:**

Stratford, Water Lane, 8 p.m.

**Saturdays:**

Edmonton, The Green, 8 p.m.

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.



# THE Socialist Standard

The Official Organ of **THE SOCIALIST PARTY** of Great Britain.

No 239. Vol. 20.]

LONDON, OCTOBER, 1923.

[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.

## THE FAILURE OF THE "CO-OPERATIVES."

A writer in the *Co-operative News* (28/7/23), signing himself "Vigilant," offers what pretends to be a criticism of an article on co-operation appearing in our July issue.

This critic endeavours to take a "safe" line. He ignores what is essential in our article, and aims his criticism at three particular points.

In our article we made clear the present position of the worker, and showed how he was limited by his enslavement. That his funds for investments were practically nil; that he is forced to buy in the cheapest market regardless of "ideals"; that, as a preliminary step, he must obtain control of political power before he can abolish slavery; that once in control of the political machinery, he can alter the economic basis of society to suit his requirements.

These points our vigilant critic ignored, preferring to "pass by on the other side."

He opens his criticism with a false statement, and winds up with two lies.

He writes:

"An editorial article in the July issue of the 'Socialist Standard,' an organ of the Socialist Labour Party."

The **SOCIALIST STANDARD** is the organ of the Socialist Party of Great Britain; a political party that is opposed to the Socialist Labour Party. The latter is a body professing to overthrow capitalism by "Industrial Action."

This opening error of "Vigilant" speaks volumes for his vigilance, and suggests how similarly "reliable" his succeeding statements may be.

He endeavours to prove that the Co-operative movement has "enormous"

capital at its disposal, but admits how small "its financial resources seem in comparison with the capital holdings of great trusts and combines." Then he inserts figures to show the large amount of money belonging to working men that is in the hands of industrial insurance societies, but handily omits either the source of his figures or information of what the figures represent—whether money paid in or the amount of the policies.

Co-operation is indeed in a bad case when its advocate has to drag in such matters as the above to try to build up capital "in the air." Even giving him the benefit of his figures, such capital is still small in comparison with that which the trusts and combines control. And the latter also control the sources of raw material which, together with political power, gives them the key to the situation.

Here is a sample of "Vigilant's" method of arguing:

"If the working people are determined to obtain their supplies through the co-operative stores, the powerful capitalists are more likely to suffer than the co-operators should they precipitate a struggle."

It is easy to demonstrate the absurdity of the above. Taking things as they are at present the working people can "determine" what they like, but their wages determine what they can spend and how they can spend. Wages in general are at such a low level that the workers are compelled to buy in the cheapest market, and that market is where the trusts control; they only go to the co-operative for the dividend dangled before them, and when that fails co-operative sales drop.



"Practically every society in the country is crying out for more and yet more trade, yet many members have stopped purchasing at their own stores because there is no dividend or there has been a reduction in the amount of dividend, and they take their trade—the life blood of the movement—to establishments where no dividend is ever paid."—(*Co-operative News*, 18/8/23.)

Farther on "Vigilant" completely smashes the co-operative position. He points to the fact that the Co-operative movement is now taking political action. If they could extend their business so as to beat the capitalist in the economic struggle, why bother about political action? Have they at last obtained a glimmering of the fact that political power gives its controllers the means to smash any opposition?

As a prop to his contention that the capitalists cannot smash the Co-operative movement if they wish, "Vigilant" makes the following remarks:

"Twenty-five years ago private capitalists banded themselves together to launch their offensives on the co-operative movement. Co-operators were dismissed from private employment, and the flow of goods from private producers to distributive societies was checked. Backed by public opinion, co-operators then beat the boycott, and have since adopted an even more menacing attitude towards the meat, soap, tea and tobacco trusts, their efforts becoming more effective as their control of the productive processes has tightened."

So menacing has been the attitude of the Co-operatives and so effective their control that at the present moment the above-mentioned trusts control the market in their respective spheres and the Co-operative is nowhere! Moreover, "Vigilant's" little fairy tale is shattered by evidence from his own side:

"In reality, the big financiers and captains of industry did not discover that the co-operative movement was really what it was until the war was well on and they found it nipping in the bud here and there their well-devised schemes for plundering the people through the necessities of the war. In all former wars it had been recognised that contracting for the Government was a sure means of securing a quick rise to fortune by the supply of shoddy materials at treble prices, and one can imagine the chagrin of those firms who found the two Co-operative Wholesale Societies insisting on charging the Government reasonable prices and supplying goods which were value for the prices charged. This was the beginning of the awakening of capitalism to the co-operative menace, but when once they became thoroughly awake it did not take them long to devise means for clipping the movement's wings."—(Editor article in "The Scottish Co-operator," 23/6/23.)

The above admission proves our contention that the capitalists can smash such an

organisation as the Co-operative when they consider the latter a menace. The entrance of the Co-operative into the political arena is further proof that they recognise their own weakness economically.

"Vigilant" scouts our contention that the Co-operatives exploit their workers and makes the curious remark:

"Theoretically, there can be no exploitation in a co-operative system of society."

In the first place we are dealing with the Co-operative movement and not a co-operative system of society. We pointed to the frequent strikes of co-operative employees, and particularly the recent one in the C.W.S. Our wily critic, however, carefully ignored these facts, although the columns of the *Co-operative News* (even the one in which his criticism appears) are full of these subjects.

The President of the N.U.D.A.W. wrote to the *Co-operative News* (18/8/23) pointing out that the wages in the C.W.S. are lower than those of a private firm doing a similar trade to that at Pelaw and quoted the following figures:

	Age	14	15	16	17	18
C.W.S.	...	10/1	13/7	18/2	23/2	27/3
Private firm	...	12/6	16/6	20/6	24/6	31/6

"The flat rate for all women at the C.W.S. is 27/3. In the private firm they are graded into four classes and even the least skilled receive 4/3 per week over the C.W.S. rate."

The above figures were printed and have neither been questioned nor denied by the *Co-operative News*.

The same issue of the *Co-operative News* states that notices of wage reductions have been posted in the various jam works of the C.W.S.

From the above it will be seen that the Co-operative concerns carry on business in the same way as any ordinary capitalist concern, so far as their workers are concerned.

We now have an illustration of "Vigilant's" knowledge of economics:

"An elementary knowledge of economics disposes of 'Gilmac's' final point. To increase co-operative production is to reduce prices, and at the same time increase the purchasing power of the common people by distributing higher 'surpluses.' Consequently, demand is stimulated, production booms, and more and more workers are absorbed into the co-operative industry."

An "elementary knowledge of economics" will very easily dispose of these

early nineteenth-century free-traders' slogans.

The Co-operative obtains its "surpluses" by conducting business on strictly capitalist lines—cutting down expenses by reducing wages and sacking workers. Carrying on their work more economically, i.e., by saving labour wherever possible, Unemployment will therefore increase. If a worker has less wages, and even, in some cases, no wages at all, lower prices (if the latter did come about!) would not increase their buying power beyond its present state.

It may, perhaps, be news to many admirers of the Co-operative movement to learn that a considerable amount of the Co-operative funds are invested outside the Co-operative movement. For instance, in 1915 they had "between four and five millions in bank balances and non-co-operative undertakings, of which the railways claim a fair share" (*Labour Year Book*, 1916, page 291), and "the investment for the movement in the War Loan of July last reached £1,500,000" (same source, page 389).

Here is further evidence that the Co-operative funds are used to exploit workers.

They also were not above "turning an honest penny" out of the slaughter of working men in the European shambles.

It is unnecessary to labour these points further, as they have already been covered in the last two issues of our paper, and "Vigilant" has not met the arguments therein set out.

Before concluding, we cannot pass unmentioned the last paragraph in "Vigilant's" alleged criticism. It reads as follows:

"We note that 'Gilmac' refers proudly and often to history in the course of his dissertation. When next he treats of co-operation we hope he will offer more than one historical fact, and that he will take it from a more authentic source than a current issue of the 'Daily News.'"

In the first place the source of an historical fact is immaterial, provided such a fact is a fact. The "fact" in question was the strike of 15,000 employees of the C.W.S. against a reduction in wages. Significantly enough "Vigilant" sneers at the source, but makes no comment on the fact.

In the second place there are lengthy quotations from G. J. Holyoake; an examination of the workers' present position under capitalism (which "Vigilant" again

completely ignores); a statement of the ideas of Robert Owen, which can be verified by anyone from Owen's short Autobiography; and much more, all of which are historical facts, and not taken from a current issue of the "Daily News."

To conclude, after all the fairy tales and superficial statements of "Vigilant," the present position of the Co-operative movement is as follows:

"The net result of the change is that, relatively to its rivals and enemies, co-operation is weaker than it was nine years ago; weaker financially and weaker administratively."—(*The Scottish Co-operator*, 23/8/23.)

GILMAC.

## FICTION AND FACT.

"If labour were going to establish their position in this country there must be no class of society which they could not touch. The time would come when labour would not be content to live under the old conditions. They needed more colour, more art, and romance and beauty, more pageantry and processions and music and dance to make themselves a power in the land."

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD, in an address to a Labour gathering at Neath, Briton Ferry and Port Talbot.

*Daily News*. 7/5/23.

How these flunkies of capitalism delight in clouding the class struggle. Here is another one on the same stunt:

"The Labour Party is no longer a class party. It includes aristocrats and democrats, manufacturers and professional men among its representatives. Mr. H. G. Wells' arrival among us is significant and valuable."

MR. JOHN HODGE, Labour M.P., writing in the *Star*. 27/2/23.

"Whoever has come to a full consciousness of the nature of Capitalist Society and the foundation of modern Socialism knows also that a Socialist movement that leaves the basis of the class struggle may be anything else, but it is not Socialism."

"No compromise—no political trading."  
WILLIAM LIEBNECHT.

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### JINGO COMMUNISTS.

One of the strongest holds the capitalists have over the minds of the workers is given by the workers' ready acceptance of the dogmas of patriotism. Before the rise of class society, and even until comparatively modern times before locomotives and steamships broke down geographical barriers, the workers did have a real interest in the country of their birth. But now that independent craftsmen and tillers of the soil have become wage earners the basis of patriotism has gone. Still the sentiment persists when even religion is fast decaying, and the master class who control the forces and services of the State are able to identify their own private interests with the instinctive patriotism of the class which has now no stake in the country. This degenerate patriotism is strong enough in the mother countries of the great empires, but it appears in its most degraded form among the members of the so-called subject-races. The British Empire is at once the foremost in power and extent, and it has developed this national spirit in its possessions to the greatest degree. In its modern form patriotism began to become a striking feature during the last quarter of the nineteenth century when, after the unrivalled trade expansion between 1846 and 1875, a period of depression and competition set in. During the previous period sufficient development on capitalist lines had taken place in India and Egypt to lead to the rise of organised agitation for independence, or at least for some measure of self-government.

There had, of course, always been widespread dislike of the foreign rulers, and to this was now added the resentment of educated natives, lawyers, state officials, merchants, etc., who felt themselves arbitrarily deprived of the best opportunities, and whose discontent was of great importance because it was capable of expression. The growing body of native capitalists and traders were, besides, coming to see what a glorious field of exploitation would be open to them if they could but use this volume of discontent to throw off alien rule. In Ireland, although there was no great gulf of race, historical tradition of suppression and religious bigotry supplied all the necessary zeal to the struggle for independence. There were, too, the very real economic grievances of

the Irish farmers and merchants, and these latter, with their intellectual leaders and publicists, were able, without great difficulty, to deceive the workers into the belief that all their troubles, too, were due to foreign tyranny. This was, of course, untrue. The workers' only useful aim is to dethrone the capitalist class. It has nothing whatever to gain by assisting one group against another. The Irish workers who were foolish enough to help Irish capitalists to win Dominion Status from Great Britain now have the chance to learn that the capitalist system is the same wherever it exists, and whatever the nationality of the rulers who use the State forces to keep the workers' hands off their property. We, as Socialists, have no sympathy whatever with the demand for independence made by native capitalist groups. We would no more assist them than assist the British Government against them. A plague on both their houses! Our only interest is to try to get the workers in both camps to mind their own business and leave this quarrel about the right to exploit to the people who gain from exploitation. Many so-called Socialists think, or at any rate act, differently. Some of them are still very much the victims of the mental disorder called patriotism, and their understanding of Socialism is nil; others are playing a double game which they call "tactics." They argue that as the people among whom it is desired to propagate Socialism are still entirely wrapped up in all kinds of antiquated illusions, then the way to clear their minds is to tack their superstitions on to the Socialist case. It is hard to imagine anything less calculated to further Socialism. When Socialists are so adaptive that they can be Catholic in Dublin, Protestant in England, Atheist in France, Free Trade, Protectionist, patriots and anti-patriots, their propaganda becomes a farce and they degenerate usually into the more or less open tools of local business interests. Some of our blustering war-time pseudo-Socialist recruiting-sergeants had a more intimate connection with the "Trade" than is gained by looking down a pint pot.

Whatever differences there may have been between the various independence movements, they had one thing in common: there was money in them. In addition, the Irish movement lent itself to the vote-

catching of the Liberal and Labour Parties in this country. Owing to the brilliant lack of success of the "tactic" in making Socialists, the professional Parliamentarians at the head of numerous stagnant parties in this country were anxiously looking for new sources of revenue. These political brigands, who live on and by the ignorance of the workers, found what they wanted by lending themselves to the political wire-pulling of the subject nations. They were willing (they said in the interests of Socialism) to encourage the vilely anti-Socialist national fanaticism which we find invariably associated with such movements. The Communists of this country have given their indiscriminate support (for what it is worth) to a round half-dozen capitalist movements of this kind, and have attempted to justify their attitude by resurrecting a plea that was familiar and discredited in the Socialist Democratic Federation thirty years ago. They talk about smashing up the Empire as a preliminary to the final struggle with the capitalist class. They forget some things. First, there is no movement or combination of movements which has the power to scratch the British Empire, much less dismember it. Secondly, the effect of their attitude is simply to strengthen the patriotism of the British worker and make him still more ignorant of, and hostile to, Socialism.

Thirdly, assuming independence could be obtained and any real progress took place in the development of Labour movements in these countries, the home capitalists would want to come back into the Empire for the assistance of a strong central Government against their own workers. The stampede back would make their present agitation to get out look sick in comparison. The Irish Communist Party, which ought by now to have learned something from experience, is not one whit better. It has pandered to Catholicism and suppressed the Moscow attitude to religion, and it has stooped so low as to appeal to the foul Jingoism which makes the Irish worker so blind to his class interests.

In the *Workers' Republic*, June 23rd, 1923 (official organ of the Communist Party of Ireland), half a column is devoted to the exposure of a "scandal." The scandal is that the capitalist Free State Government has placed orders for army uniforms in London instead of in Dublin! This stag-

gering charge "can be proved to the hilt if needs be."

Just consider with me the enormity of it. The Free State capitalists keep troops to protect their property against the propertyless Irish workers. During the last few months, for instance, troops have been openly used to help farmers in Waterford against strikers. If the Communists or anyone else kick against the Free State Government they will get shot, and the remedy they propose is to have the uniforms made in Dublin! They wouldn't like to be shot by a man in an English-made uniform, but these internationalists will be perfectly happy if the uniforms are made at home. Their joy would have no bounds if the bullets were Irish through and through, and what would happen if they were made by Trade Union labour as well it is beyond me to imagine.

But we must be fair. Communists are economists as well. "Can you wonder why their is so much unemployment in Dublin?" To think, dear reader, that it has never occurred to you that if only all the capitalists had their army uniforms made at home the unemployment problem would be solved! It never struck these Simple Simons that contracts and jobless workers have a habit of going to the best market, and that if, owing to bad trade, prices are lower in Dublin, the English manufacturer would sub-let the work to the Dublin sweat shops, even if they are not, as is probably the case, already working in harmony.

The *Workers' Republic* writer, in fact, appears to have decidedly more than a grain of sympathy for these clothing bosses because they "have had to close their doors for want of contracts, and others are standing off their workers for the same reason." These people occasionally have the nerve to call themselves Marxists!

And the excuse for all this lying and humbug is always the same. They are in a hurry and want to bring the poor benighted workers in. On this ground, more than any other, their policy is damned. Not only are the recruits, soaked in religion and patriotism, totally unreliable and of no conceivable value in their present state for Socialism, but their numbers are not sufficient to justify the telling of the whitest and most forgivable of fibs, let alone the turgid stream of corruption these Communists call propaganda. The sooner they



give up pandering to working-class political ignorance and devote themselves to teaching (and learning) Socialism, the sooner will the nationality problem be solved. The capitalists of the subject nations will line up with the Central Government of the Empire for protection against the growing unity of the working class, and the way will be cleared for the real fight—the fight for working-class emancipation.

H.

### A STUDENT OF FRAUDS.

The recent debate in the House of Commons on a resolution of Mr. Snowden's gave rise to quite a number of articles in the press on what is understood by most people to be Socialism.

Now, most of the writers in the daily press who pretend to deal with Socialism—generally, once and for all—display the most pitiful ignorance of the subject. Not one of them appears to know anything of the writings of Marx, except through other writers and critics who have been either incapable of understanding him, or who have been wholly interested in perverting or misconstruing him.

Marx proved conclusively—and showed how—that capitalism is a system where the mass of the people, the workers, are robbed of the wealth they produce by the class that calls itself capitalist. Hence, the capitalist and those who serve him find themselves in direct opposition to those who have adopted the truths discovered by Marx. They are totally unable to deny, or even meet, these truths. There has never yet been either an honest or dishonest critic who has discovered any weakness or flaw in the reasoning of Marx, nor anything false in his facts or the evidence on which they are built.

The book writers who have spelt out dreary criticisms through dry volumes have involved themselves in endless contradictions, and only succeeded in branding themselves as wordy ignoramuses, or, what is worse, perverters of scientific truths. The latter is more likely to be the correct estimate, as such writers usually show that they have some intimacy with the works of Marx.

The average writer in the press, on the contrary, is as serenely ignorant as the majority of his readers as to the nature of

Marxian philosophy or the real meaning of Socialism. Their ignorance, however, is easily accounted for. The slight knowledge they possess is obtained from parties like the Independent Labour Party, which only recognises one fact in common with the Socialist Party—the fact of the workers' poverty. They have never yet proclaimed the cause of that poverty, never admitted the antagonism between the capitalist and Working Class, and never declared in unmistakable language that the workers must abolish the capitalist system and establish a new order based on the common ownership and democratic control of all the means of wealth production. All they have done is to recognise the poverty of the workers, foist themselves upon them as leaders with promises of reforms, and bleed them. Truly, ignorance of Socialism is seen to be, not a disadvantage, but an asset, for Labour leaders, industrial and political, as well as for the average political writer. They can, one and all, write or speak in accord with popular fallacies without fear of the truth getting in the way of better-paying utterances.

Mr. Snowden's definition of Socialism was, "The public ownership and democratic control of the instruments of production and distribution." A writer in the *Daily Chronicle* (18/7/23), calling himself "A Student of Politics," accepts this definition and quite easily shows what a failure it would be from the workers' point of view. There is no quibbling with words on his part: "Public ownership" means exactly the same for him that it does for Mr. Snowden and the I.L.P. He argues that the public ownership of the instruments of production means the transference of capital from private capitalists to collective possession by them. He points out quite correctly "That it brings no message of comfort to the worker that henceforth his employer will be an omnipotent abstraction called the State"—a point which the Labour Party has never met when challenged by the Socialist.

With regard to the Labour Party's proposal to buy out the capitalist, "A Student of Politics" says:

"I can understand confiscation of capital such as has taken place in Russia. That is revolution and robbery. But Socialism which does not confiscate and refuses to rob anyone, seems to me to have no more virtue than a new system of book-keeping."

To him nationalisation is "Capitalism in a new guise with the State as master"; and he is quite correct when he describes it in his title as "Sham Remedies of Socialism." All these kind of shams stand in the way of the real thing and hide it with senseless clatter and drivel.

If industry is nationalised, a "Student of Politics" points out, interest has to be paid on capital, while so much has to be put by for sinking fund, depreciation, etc., just as capitalists do at present. He then asks where is the money coming from for any great improvement in the workers' position? The Labour Party has been repeatedly asked this question by Socialists. Obviously, if capitalist wealth is not appropriated—which is so-called confiscation—the payment of interest to buy out capitalists must be equivalent to present dividends. To talk of a fair rate of interest, as some Labour Leaders do, is only begging the question, because a "fair rate" would be an average rate on present dividends. But all such points are dust in the balance beside the main fact that only by cheaper production—less workers and reduced wages—can nationalised industries compete in the world markets.

The object of the Socialist Party is the only possible definition of Socialism. Mr. Snowden and "A Student of Politics," together with a host of others with similar ambitions, are, either knowingly or unknowingly, wrong when they define it as anything else. How is it possible to end the capitalist system unless society is established on principles where wealth can no longer be used as capital? It is the use of wealth in this way that gives its name to the present system. The reverse of capitalism must be a system where the means of wealth production are owned in common and democratically controlled by the whole of the people.

Under such a system there can be no question of the State being the only employer, because there are no longer employers and employed, no longer capitalists and wage-slaves. Instead, there are men and women producing to satisfy all their needs according to a plan agreed upon as the result of experience, discussion, and majority voting.

"A Student of Politics" says:

"There must be some more modern, some more English diagnosis of our trouble than that of the German Marx two generations ago."

And if Mr. Snowden's definition of Socialism were identical with that of Marx, "A Student of Politics" would be right. The Labour Party, however, has never analysed the capitalist system correctly; has never shown why we have poverty in spite of the material means at our disposal for production in plenty. Nor has its greatest exponents, or its most irresponsible wild men, ever outlined a course of action for the workers that would free them from their present exploitation.

"A Student of Politics" should study Marx for himself, when he would not make the mistake of supposing that the childish fallacies and futile reforms of the Labour Party and I.L.P. are built on, or in any way deducible from, the writings of that great thinker.

His own contribution to the subject, entitled "A Liberal Alternative," is just as fallacious as that of the Labour Party:

"To have more capitalists to distribute the rewards of industrial efficiency more fairly and to insure as far as possible that no industrial virtue should go without its capitalistic reward."

The cure for hydrophobia used to be a hair of the dog that did the biting. "A Student of Politics" would substitute another bite for the hair. It requires little reasoning ability to see that an increase in the number of capitalists would mean greater competition for markets, a reduction in wages wherever possible in order to cheapen products, and a consequent intensification of the workers' struggle for existence. Markets would be glutted more rapidly, and the usual "capitalist reward for industrial virtue"—the sack—would be dealt out to the workers more freely.

F. F.

### MIGHT IS RIGHT.

"Between equal rights force decides. Hence it is that in the history of capitalist production, the determination of what is a working day presents itself as the result of a struggle, a struggle between collective capital, i.e., the class of capitalists, and collective labour, i.e., the working class."

KARL MARX.

"The rich will not move without 'capital'; a goad—I have and hold—you shall hunger and covet—until you are strong enough to force my hand."

GEORGE MEREDITH.



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**The Socialist Standard,**

OCTOBER



1923

**PRODUCE MORE—CHILDREN!**

At the meeting of the British Association in Liverpool some of the scientists demonstrated once again that the payer of the piper calls the tune. Official science must give evidence, now and again, that it is a bulwark of capitalism, so that learned professors may obtain the wherewithal to live and carry on their studies.

Many years ago it was alleged that an important cause of the workers' poverty was the largeness of the worker's family. Since that time war has swept away a huge number of the pick of manhood. In spite of this latter fact, there are, at the present time, nearly two million workers wanting employment. One would imagine, therefore, that any present restrictions in the size of the worker's family would be welcome, particularly as so much is made of the difficulty of handling the "unemployment problem."

But the capitalist does not aim at solving unemployment. If he did solve this problem he would be placed in a similar position to that in which he found himself during the war—forced to pay comparatively high wages on account of the shortage of the labour supply. Since the war the labour supply has overflowed the demand, and the capitalist has been able to press wages down.

Under capitalism business moves at varying rates of speed. At one time there is a rush of business; at another time there is a slump. The employers require a supply of labour sufficient to meet the demands of brisk business and still have a sufficient number of workers over to prevent those in work from demanding wages above the normal. In periods of slump the number of workers over during the busy time is swelled by the number the slump throws out of work, and the unemployment problem becomes acute.

The growing difficulty of sustaining life, even at the best of times, has a tendency in recent years to force the workers to limit the size of their families. The capitalist sees in this a dangerous symptom—a symptom that might reduce the industrial reserve army and limit the extent of his profits.

It is just here that the scientist can lend him some aid—and he does his "duty."

The Special Correspondent of the *Daily News*, reporting the speech of Dr. Vaughan Cornish, President of the Geographical Section, writes:

"In his opinion if you are to do your duty to the Empire you must have at least four children. He made it clear that you should not invite children into the world for their own pleasure or amusement, but should enlist them, as it were, in an army for home defence."

"In his view it appeared children were merely potential soldiers."

"In order to have strategic security in this island," he insisted, "we must be able to meet the air force of a European combination as well as to carry out our traditional plan of dispatching a powerful expeditionary force for the support of a friendly Power. This active defence requires a large population."—(*Daily News*, 14/9/23.)

Imagine urging us to increase our families so that our children may provide food for guns! And the monuments to the "glorious dead" are still being covered with wreaths, though their dependants cannot find the necessary covering to shelter them from the inclement weather.

But the patriotic plea put forward is only a cloak for the masters' desire for cheap labour.

Not only do the masters require an industrial reserve army, but they also require a plentiful supply of youthful labour. Machines are taking a greater part in industry as time goes on, and the operation of these machines is becoming more and more the work of children. In spite of

official regulations, the half-time system is growing. According to the *Westminster Gazette* (27/8/23), there are 3,437 children between the ages of 12 and 13 at work in Staffordshire alone. In Rochdale the number of half-timers increased from 871 in 1915 to 1,219 in 1920.

Therefore, workers, if you would raise up multitudes of youthful competitors and provide the employers with cheaper labour, then heed the advice of the scientist—be fruitful and multiply.

**THE CAPITAL LEVY.**

To the Editor of THE SOCIALIST STANDARD.

Sir,

In your issue of August last you express your opposition to the Capital Levy and to my line of reasoning in defence of it. With your permission I propose to answer your criticism, and will be as brief as I can.

To begin with, let us see how far we are in accord. Firstly, I agree that "a small class does own the bulk of the means of producing wealth in this and other capitalist countries." In my book on "The Capital Levy" I have demonstrated this (for Britain) by overwhelming figures.

Secondly, I agree that this small capitalist class in the main controls to-day the political machine. Thirdly, I agree that capitalists pay wages not because they are philanthropists, but because they are compelled by economic forces. Finally, I agree that the system of capitalism has many inherent evils and that there is no way out except by Socialism.

I do not agree with you however either (1) that under capitalism the workers as a whole have no "surplus over their minimum needs," or (2) that under Socialism the burden of the National Debt will be automatically lifted.

With regard to (1), you yourself in another part of your article recognise that wages must be "broadly regarded" as based for "different sections of workers under different climatic conditions, and with different social standards and different lines of historical development on their standard of living." This is surely a much more elastic view than is implied by the words "minimum needs." But, even so, I cannot

admit your case. What I will admit is that standard of living and weekly wages are intimately connected. Take two men—a skilled mechanic earning £4 and a labourer earning £2 10s. The family of the former have a standard of living at the £4 rate, while that of the latter live at the £2 10s. rate. I suggest it is much nearer the truth to say that the standard of living depends on the wages, than that the wages depend on the standard of living.

If you ask me, "On what then do wages depend?" I will answer in your own words, "on the economic forces," and these economic forces include such complex questions as the amount of unemployment, the state of trade, foreign competition, world prices, and so on.

Of course, this distinction between us is vital, for if once it is recognised (as I hold) that wages depend on something other than an automatically-assessed standard of living, then the worker is vitally interested in the lightening of the load of taxation, and stands to gain by a Capital Levy, which will enable taxes on tea, coffee, cocoa, sugar, etc., to be taken off, and that on tobacco reduced. If, on the other hand, you are right, it would make no difference to the workers if the income tax, super tax, death duties, etc., were done away with, and all the revenue were collected from beer, tobacco, tea and the food of the workers. I would remind you that the apologists for the old French Aristocracy took this view in the middle of the eighteenth century and that the revolution followed.

Turning now to the other principal difference between us, I submit that even under Socialism there will be many important problems to be solved. I would remind you that Socialism does not imply the equal subdivision of all wealth, nor the collective ownership of all wealth. But unless Socialists are prepared to tackle the grave evil of maldistribution they will seriously disappoint their supporters. The first step in this direction is to get rid of the National Debt by placing it on the holders of the existing wealth of the country; and I submit that this step if not already taken during the establishment of Socialism would certainly have to be taken immediately afterwards.

I should exceed the space you can afford me if I were to attempt to answer all the minor points you have raised, but as these



two major differences go to the root of the whole matter they will probably suffice.

Yours, etc.,  
F. W. PETHICK LAWRENCE.

### REPLY.

I must first point out that I did *not* say that the workers have "no surplus over their minimum needs," although, as a matter of fact, few of them indeed are able to accumulate any property worth mentioning. What I did was to take two alternatives—"the workers either receive a surplus . . . or they do not"—and to try to show that, whichever be correct, taxation could not affect them as a class. It was not necessary to say which is correct, and I did not do so, as without further explanation of "minimum needs" such an assertion would be misleading.

The assertion I did make was that referred to by Mr. Pethick Lawrence as "a more elastic view," and I hoped when I wrote it that I had made it quite clear that the workers' standard of living is not in my opinion "an automatically-assessed standard of living," but is "elastic." It is the resultant of a number of factors which change continuously, and moreover which include the workers' political knowledge, assertiveness, and mental independence.

I need not labour this further or deal with Mr. Lawrence's discussion of the relation of wages and the standard of living, because I think he has not gone to the root of our disagreement. I will therefore restate my view.

The standard of living is not measured simply by the amount of money wages received. It consists of the amount of real wealth, food, clothing and shelter, etc., finally consumed by the working class. The relation this amount bears to the whole product of the labour of the workers depends at any given time on the interaction of the "economic forces." The capitalists, who are the legal owners of the whole, give to the workers just as much as they are compelled to give. Now, unless the Capital Levy disturbs this equilibrium of forces in the workers' favour, their standard of living will *not* be improved. Or, as I put it in my article, "Would the capitalists, if there were no taxation at all, give the workers a larger share of the wealth produced, and if so, why?" This basic question has not been answered.

To say that some workers or all workers receive £1 and have to return £1 as taxes, only means that at the given moment £3, and not £4, is the money value of the standard of living produced by the existing forces. If that were not so, the workers would be able to demand and to get an increase of, say, £1 per week. Their ability to make such demands is limited always by the control the capitalists have over the key position, the political machinery.

Of course, Socialist Society will have its own problems to solve, but the National Debt will not be one of them. We are some of those rare people who, in spite of calling themselves Socialists, actually desire *Socialism*. Under Socialism—that is, a "system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth"—there will be no room for individuals to live by their ownership of some of society's resources. We do not aim at the "equal" (or unequal) "sub-division" of anything; nor would we be so foolish as to advocate the "collective ownership of all wealth." Wealth, as distinct from the means of producing wealth, does not permit of being collectively owned.

In view of Mr. Pethick Lawrence's subsequent remarks, I must dissent from his opinion that he and I are agreed that, "there is no way out except by Socialism." To me his "way out" seems to be merely a way cut into the wilderness. The Capital Levy is not Socialism; it does not lead to Socialism; and it still remains to be shown how its introduction would in any way better the position of the working class within the capitalist system.

H.

[Mr. Lawrence can, if he wishes, have space to explain further his position and to deal with the points raised in the reply.]

### THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS!

"Journalists are the tools and vassals of rich men behind the scenes. We are the jumping jacks. They pull the strings and we dance. Our talents, our possibilities, our lives, are the property of other men."

JEROME K. JEROME.

(The New Witness. 9/2/23.)

### MACDONALD'S HYPOCRISY.

A minor storm hath arisen in one of the London districts in connection with certain past actions of one Ramsay Macdonald.

Some of our members in the district in question asserted in discussion that Macdonald had backed Sir John Brunner's Bill to Amend the Education Acts and thereby increase child slavery.

#### SIMPLICITY.

A Mr. Easton took up the point and, apparently so staggered at the suggested duplicity of his "honourable Leader," wrote Macdonald on the matter. Below is a copy of what appears to be the second letter Mr. Easton wrote Macdonald:

[COPY.]

Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, M.P.  
Dear Comrade,

You will remember I wrote you a little while back *re* certain charges made against you by the Socialist Party of Great Britain. You suggested I should demand specific evidence. They have brought to our Branch of the I.L.P. a copy of the "Socialist Standard" for July, 1906, wherein is quoted an article of Frank Rose in the "Clarion" stating that you back Sir J. Brunner's Bill to allow children to be worked by the capitalists. That is the charge, you would help the cause if you will give your reply. I think you were then General Secretary of the I.L.P., I am not quite sure.

I hope you will not think me impertinent in following up this matter.

All best wishes.

Your faithful comrade,

(Signed) FRED. EASTON.

July 25th, 1923.

#### PHANTASY.

Readers will notice that the charge contained in the letter is, "that you backed Sir John Brunner's Bill to allow children to be worked by the capitalist." To this charge Macdonald replied as follows:

[COPY.]

My Dear Easton,

Thank you very much for all the trouble you have taken. The statement that I backed a Bill of the nature described is nothing but a fabrication. I cannot remember the provisions of Bills I backed in 1906, but I know this perfectly well, and I think that I can ask you to accept my attitude on education and child labour as a proof of my statement, that whatever Bill I backed was to protect children from the capitalist and to give them a better chance of education.

From time to time, the section whom you are now fighting has misrepresented—sometimes on account of their ignorance, but not infrequently on account of their malice—things I have said and done, and I can assure you this is an instance of it.

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) J. RAMSAY MACDONALD.

July 25th, 1923.

His reply to the charge, then, is, in the first place, "The statement that I backed a Bill of the nature described is a fabrication."

#### FACT.

Before the Brunner Bill was introduced into Parliament 12 and 13 were the earliest ages at which children might be *partially exempted* from attending day school.

In May, 1906, Sir John Brunner asked leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Education Acts. The description on the back of this Bill runs as follows:

EDUCATION ACTS AMENDMENT.

#### A BILL

To amend the Education Acts, 1870 to 1903.  
Presented by Sir John Brunner,

supported by

Sir William Anson, Mr. Burt, Mr. Butcher, Mr. Cameron Corbett, Mr. Crooks, Mr. Eve, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Mr. Masterman, Mr. George White, Mr. Whitley, and Mr. Yoxall.

Ordered by the House of Commons to be Printed  
21st May, 1906.

Printed by Eyre and Spottiswoode, etc., etc.  
[Bill 220.]

On the cover (or first page) of this Bill it states:

#### "Memorandum."

"This Bill provides that local authorities may fix thirteen as the minimum age for total exemption from attendance at a public elementary school if they frame bye-laws for the attendance of children so exempted at some recognised continuation school for at least three evenings a week until they attain the age of sixteen years. In the rural districts it is provided that the local authorities may fix twelve as the minimum age for total exemption in the case of boys who have definite and regular agricultural employment, and whose parents desire that they shall be so employed, on condition that they attend a continuation school for at least two evenings a week during the winter months until the age of sixteen."

Page 1, Clause 1, contains the two paragraphs covering the above two points.

It will be seen that, where formerly children were only *partially exempted* from day school attendance, i.e., half-timers, this Act gave them *total exemption*, thus allowing them to be worked, their whole day, in the mind and body destroying atmosphere of modern industry at an earlier age than formerly, and thereby increasing the amount of child slavery—the essence of the charge against Macdonald.

He "cannot remember the provision of Bills I backed in 1906." Oh, perfidious politician! Was it then of such small



account as to be easily forgotten, this attempt to smother youthful bloom in factory hells? The brutalisation of childish minds; the maiming and dwarfing and mis-shaping of tiny limbs under the influence of the machine?

Not content with working children of such an early age, the whole day long they must needs complete the diabolical work by driving them to school in the evenings, instead of allowing them this small opportunity for the rest and amusement so essential to childhood. They take away the child's opportunity of acquiring education during the normal time—the daytime—and seek to pump knowledge into him when he is too tired to think. And this is done *in the interests of those who want cheap labour.*

Imagine the harm suffered by a child leaving the suffocating atmosphere of a factory to work in the close atmosphere and artificial light of a schoolroom; or leaving the backaching work of the fields to stoop over a desk and cramp little fingers striving to form letters; or leaving the work of a long day of concentration upon work under a foreman or overseer to force the wandering thoughts to concentrate upon figures under the exacting rules of the schoolroom.

Was this action of Macdonald's such as "to protect children from the Capitalist and to give them a better chance of education"?

As to the "better chance of education," the harm done to the general health and mental capacities of children in the towns where the half-time system flourishes has been frequently dwelt on. Educational experts have pointed out that the children come to school tired and sleepy and lose education during the most important time of their lives; and of this Macdonald, as a one time teacher, must have been well aware.

#### ○ Duplicity.

To estimate more fully the depth of Macdonald's treachery one should consult the Report of the Thirteenth Annual Conference of the I.L.P. (1905), page 55, and read clause 5 of their programme of "demands," which demands—

"The raising of the age of child labour, with a view to its ultimate extinction."

Compare this "demand" of the party of which he was secretary with the terms of Brunner's Bill which he backed, and it will

be easy to decide from whence comes the "fabrication."

No wonder Macdonald said, at a Westbourne Park Fellowship meeting on March 12th last:

"The work of the politician was one long experiment with truth."—("Daily News," 12/3/23.)

If Mr. Easton wishes the evidence of his eyes to verify the statements quoted above, he can obtain it in two ways. Either obtain the Brunner Bill from the Government stationery office, or visit our Head Office and examine the document by arrangement with the General Secretary. The same remark applies to other "unbelievers" GILMAC.

### "AGRICULTURE AND THE GUILD SYSTEM."

By MONTAGUE FORDHAM. 24 pages, price 4d. I.L.P. 308, Grays Inn Road.

Mr. Fordham summarises his proposals in a paragraph, thus (p. 9):—

"... we have to secure Democratic Control of agriculture, the limitation of the rights of private owners over the land, the establishment of just prices and just pay, and the replacing of the dealers and other middlemen by co-operation. Then we can get what we should have been aiming at all the time—farming for food, with a reasonable return, many well-paid workers on the land, and the economic basis for restoration of a jovial country life."

He sees, however, that the bear has to be caught and killed before it can be skinned.

"It is quite unwise to suppose that what is substantially an agricultural revolution can ever begin whilst power remains in the hands of the landlords, large farmers, land agents, solicitors, bankers, dealers and middlemen." (Page 10.)

He tells us also on page 10 that control cannot be obtained through the Trade Unions, but does not tell us how it is to be obtained. He skips this, and goes straight on to tell us what the parish will do when control has passed "out of the hands of the landlords" into those of a "National Chamber of Agriculture . . . responsible to Parliament alone." As the owning class control Parliament, we have in fact first to capture that seat of power—a detail Mr. Fordham apparently overlooks. It is by no means an unimportant detail, because the present ruling and owning class will never willingly yield to any denial whatsoever of the rights of private property. They may be willing to listen to suggestions for the better ordering of their economic system, and one section of the capitalist

class may be not only interested but quite enthusiastic about a harmless-looking scheme which will in effect enable them to plunder some other section. It will be noticed from Fordham's statement quoted above that he is not proposing to *destroy* private ownership, only to "limit" it; and behind some interesting, but quite irrelevant, discussion of the economic machinery operative under the total different conditions of the Guilds in Mediæval England, we find that Fordham's suggestion is simply a form of indirect subsidy. He adduces arguments which he considers should weigh sufficiently with the financial and industrial capitalists to make them willing to maintain the agricultural industry, temporarily at least, out of their profits. Since the eighties of last century British agriculture has been badly hit by competition which arose when railways opened up the interiors of North and South America and, later, Russia, thus making it possible to ship foodstuffs to industrial Europe. The first two had virgin soil needing no fertilisers, and so vast as to permit extensive cultivation, and the wheat from all three was put on the home market at a price which forbade profitable arable farming except under very advantageous conditions. This was profitable for the manufacturers, for whom cheap food meant low wages. They had discovered this in 1846, when they repealed the Corn Laws. Incidentally, the ruin of agriculture and the depopulation of the countryside was also good for them, as it increased the supply of cheap labour in the towns.

But during the present century this supply of cheap food from abroad has shown signs of decreasing. Railway freights in U.S.A. have steadily risen, virgin soils are being exhausted, and intensive cultivation has had to be substituted, while the growing industrial populations of these countries are coming to need all their home supplies. Russia has left the market, and, curiously enough, in that country now we have just the reverse of the policy Mr. Fordham suggests. The Bolsheviks are driven to subsidise their bankrupt industries out of agriculture. Whether they can succeed in such a policy will depend on their maintaining their control of the Government. They are at least realists, but Mr. Fordham thinks he can carry out his scheme *without* capturing political power.

In view of the changing agricultural situ-

ation, the British industrial capitalists have had to consider of recent years whether it would not be worth their while artificially to stimulate agricultural production by subsidies, in fact of the declining quantity and threatened rising price of foreign wheat. The problem was temporarily brought to a head during the war, when a bonus was given for the growing of wheat and oats, coupled with a statutory minimum wage for agricultural labourers. The whole of this machinery was scrapped in October, 1921.

Mr. Fordham does not want the re-introduction of the Corn Production Act, but he wants prices to be "stabilised" and "a just price, to be based on cost of production." This, he thinks, would also cut out the middleman who at present gets the bulk of the retail prices of farm produce, and lead to the formation of Distributive Co-operative Societies.

Fordham admits that the limitation of imports would be necessary, which means that prices would, in spite of his statements to the contrary, be raised above world prices to benefit agriculturists. In short, through all the fog of Mr. Fordham's reasoning we see that the essence of his case is that the industrial and financial capitalists are to be asked to dip their hands in their pockets to guarantee to farmers the average rate of profit on their capital.

The necessary adjunct of capitalist private ownership, the wage system, is to remain, but wages of labourers are to be secured at an "adequate" level by the price-fixing authority.

The introduction of this scheme will depend, while the capitalists remain in power, on their view as to whether the economic, political, and military gains to them justify the expenditure. Mr. Fordham should therefore offer his advice to the proper quarter.

As Mr. Fordham says (page 6), various things will happen, "If the British Government will give facilities," etc., etc. There is just one thing for which the British Government will *not* give "facilities"; that is Socialism. It yet remains to be shown by Mr. Fordham how a slave class can improve its position except at the expense of its masters, or how propertyless workers can emancipate themselves except by appropriating for the use of society the private property of the present owners.



If the workers capture political power for the purpose of introducing Socialism, they can, in abolishing capitalism, also sweep away the minor evils and problems of organisation which worry Mr. Fordham.

I notice with amusement that he receives most flattering notices from G. K. Chesterton and A. J. Pentty. Chesterton once remarked of Pentty that he was one of the two or three really original minds of our day. I wondered then who was the third. It now only remains for Mr. Fordham to say something really nice about Chesterton.

Personally, I wish all of them would find some little hell of their own on which to inflict their precious schemes for the Feudalisation of society. The workers would do far better to learn something about capitalism as it really is to-day, than to be misled by the fantastic pictures of Mediæval Europe drawn by these three romantic humbugs.

H.

## THE SOCIALIST PARTY AND TRADE UNIONS.

Manchester,  
July 5th, 1923.

Comrades,

Your contention that the workers do not pay rates and taxes on the basis that what he hasn't got he cannot part with has always seemed to me quite sound. But in this month's SOCIALIST STANDARD Comrade Reynolds declares, "For, bad as the condition of the working class is, only a fool would deny that it could be far worse." This seems to me to contradict the above, for if his condition can be made worse, to say nothing of far worse, it surely can be made so by the capitalists collectively (taxation) as by the capitalists individually (wages).

The point I would wish to make is that, according to our friend Reynolds, the worker has a surplus or margin above the bare subsistence level, thus rendering him susceptible to taxation in his degree even as the man with £10,000 a year.

Yours fraternally,  
INQUIRER.

Our contention that taxation does not affect the working class is in no way contradicted by the statement quoted from the

July SOCIALIST STANDARD. The statement is made to indicate the fact that the struggle of the workers on the economic field over the question of wages, hours, and the general conditions of employment does to some extent act as a brake upon the tendency of capitalism to worsen the condition of the working class. The writer does not imply that the workers have "a surplus or margin above the bare subsistence level, thus rendering them "susceptible to taxation"; on the contrary, he implies that it is necessary for the workers to carry on the struggle in order that they should realise the value of their labour-power.

Of course, the workers have no surplus above the subsistence level, out of which to pay taxes. But it does not follow that because of that fact their condition could not be worse than it is at present. The social condition of the workers not only could be worse, but is actually becoming so as capitalism develops. For instance, as more efficient methods of wealth production are introduced, unemployment increases, and, with the consequent increase of competition for jobs, the workers are subject to a more intensive exploitation, their position is more insecure, and their poverty becomes greater than ever.

Now "Inquirer" seems to be of the opinion that the level of subsistence is a fixed point. But that is not the case. The workers sell their energy to the capitalist at the cost of their subsistence, but the cost of subsistence depends upon, among other things, the standard of living which varies in different trades and in different countries. The standard of living is a product of historical and social forces, and may be raised or lowered. As Marx puts it:

"The value of labour is in every country determined by a traditional standard of life. It is not a mere physical life, but it is the satisfaction of certain wants springing from the social conditions in which people are placed and reared up. The English standard of life may be reduced to the Irish standard; the standard of life of a German peasant to that of a Livonian peasant."—"Value, Price and Profit."

And, as the whole history of capitalism shows, the tendency is in the direction of lowering the standard of living of the workers, to the extent, to use the words of Marx, of reducing the whole working class to the "utmost state of degradation." Around this question of the standard of

living a constant struggle goes on between the workers and the capitalists. The former endeavouring to maintain it at a certain level, and the latter endeavouring to reduce it to its lowest point. It is precisely here where the organisation of the workers on the economic field functions. By means of withholding their labour-power, or threatening to do so, the workers do, to a certain extent, put a brake upon the encroachments of capital. In other words, whilst the workers by trade union action cannot altogether prevent the worsening of the social condition, they can slow down the worsening process.

To state such an obvious truth, namely, that the condition of the workers could be far worse, is something totally different from saying that the workers have a surplus above the subsistence level out of which to pay taxes. For the workers to be susceptible to taxation would necessitate their getting a surplus above the amount necessary for their subsistence as wealth producers for the capitalists, and this they do not get. Consequently, the capitalists cannot make the condition of the workers worse by means of taxation. They can and do, however, by means of reducing wages and intensifying exploitation, a fact with which we as workers are painfully acquainted.

R. REYNOLDS.

### £1,000 FUND.

Already acknowledged	..	..	£923 15 2½
By Donations:—			
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### ERRATA.

Entry in September £1,000 Fund List—"Baby Woan," 5/-—should have read "Babies Joan and W." 5/-.

## A PROFESSOR ON THE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY.

"What are the great poetical names of the last hundred years or so? Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Landor, Keats, Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Morris, Rossetti, Swinburne—we may stop there. Of these all but Keats, Browning and Rossetti were university men; and of these three Keats, who died young, cut off in his prime, was the only one not fairly well-to-do. It may seem a brutal thing to say, and it is a sad thing to say; but, as a matter of hard fact, the theory that poetical genius bloweth where it listeth, and equally in poor and rich, holds little truth. As a matter of hard fact nine out of those twelve were university men, which means that somehow or other they procured the means to get the best education England can give. As a matter of hard fact of the remaining three you know that Browning was well-to-do, and I challenge you that, if he had not been well-to-do, he would no more have attained to writing "Saul" or the "Ring and the Book," than Ruskin would have attained to writing "Modern Painters," if his father had not dealt prosperously in business. Rossetti had a small private income; and, moreover, he painted. There remains but Keats, whom Atropos slew young, as he slew John Clare in a madhouse, and James Thompson by the laudanum he took to drug disappointment. These are dreadful facts, but let us face them. It is—however dishonouring to us as a nation—certain that by some fault in our commonwealth the poor poet has not in these days, nor has had for two hundred years, a dog's chance. Believe me—and I have spent a great part of the last ten years in watching some 320 Elementary Schools—we may prate of democracy, but actually a poor child in England has little more hope than had the son of an Athenian slave to be emancipated into that intellectual freedom of which great writings are born." (Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, "On the Art of Writing," page 33, 1923 Edition.)

\* \* \* \*

A rebuke for those who cannot think.  
"Science gives us the conscious domination over things and unconditional security in handling them."

JOSEPH DIETZGEN.



**SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****BRANCH DIRECTORY.**

**BATTERSEA.**—Communications to A. Jones, 3 Matthew-st., Letchmere Estate, Battersea, S.W. Branch meets Mondays, 8.30, at 16 Creek-st., York-rd.

**BIRMINGHAM.**—Communications to L. Vinetsky, 11 Upper Dean-st., Birmingham. Branch meets A.E.U. Institute, Spiceal-st., every Saturday.

**CENTRAL.**—Membership obtained only through the Ex. Committee. Applications to General Sec.

**DEPTFORD.**—Sec., J. Veasey, 24, Marlton-st., E. Greenwich, S.E. 10. Branch meets 1st and 3rd Wednesdays in month, at 8 o'clock, at 435, New Cross-rd., S.E. Discussion after Branch business. Public invited.

**EAST LONDON.**—Communications to A. Jacobs, Sec., 78 Eric-st., Mile-end, E.3. Branch meets first and third Mondays in month at 141 Bow-rd.

**EDINBURGH.**—Communications to Andrew Porter, 12a, Kings-rd., Portobello.

**HACKNEY.**—Communications to the Sec., 78 Greenwood-rd., E.8. Branch meets Fridays, 7.30, at The Arcadians, 42, Amburst-rd., Hackney Stn.

**HANLEY.**—Branch meets Mondays, Working Men's Club, Glass-st. Communications to Sec., T. Travis, 27, Arthur Street, Cobridge, Staffs.

**ISLINGTON.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8.30, at 144 Seven Sisters-rd., Holloway, N. Communications to W. Baker, 35 Alma-st., Kentish Town, N.W.

**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.**—Communications to Sec., J. Bird, 5 Wellington-avenue, Westcliffe-on-Sea.

**TOOTING.**—Communications to Sec., 3, Lyveden-rd., Tooting, S.W.17. Branch meets Fridays, at Parochial Hall, Church-lane, Tooting, at 8 p.m.

**TOTTENHAM.**—Sec., G. Boyden, 11, Somerset-road, Upper Edmonton. Branch meets Fridays, The Trades Hall, 7, Bruce-grove, Tottenham. Discussion after branch business. Public invited.

**WALTHAMSTOW.**—Communications to A. J. Godfrey, 30, Waverley road, Walthamstow, E.17. Branch meets at Workmen's Hall, High-st., every Monday.

**WATFORD.**—A. Lawson, Sec., 107 Kensington-avenue, Watford.

**WEST HAM.**—Branch meets Thursdays at 8 p.m. at 167 Romford rd., Stratford. Communications to P. Hallard, 22 Colegrave-rd., Stratford, E.

**WOOD GREEN.** Branch meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month at 8 p.m., at Alexandra School, N.22.

**S.P.G.B. PROPAGANDA MEETINGS****LONDON DISTRICT.****Sundays:**

Finbury Park, 3 p.m.  
Clapham Common, 3 p.m.  
Leytonstone, The Green Man, 11.30 a.m.  
Tottenham, West Green Corner, 7.30 p.m.  
Victoria Park, 3.30 p.m.

**Mondays:**

Highbury Corner, 8 p.m.

**Thursdays:**

Dalston, Queen's Road, 8.30 p.m.

**Friday:**

Stratford, Water Lane, 8 p.m.  
Walthamstow, High Street, (Opposite Baths), 8 p.m.

**Saturdays:**

Edmonton, The Green, 8 p.m.

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY  
OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.



# THE Socialist Standard

The Official Organ of **THE SOCIALIST PARTY** of Great Britain.

No 231. Vol. 20.]

LONDON, NOVEMBER, 1923.

[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.

## UNEMPLOYMENT— CAUSE AND CURE.

There are now upwards of 1½ million workers registered as unemployed in Great Britain. How many there are not registered, and how many are working short time, it is impossible to say, but we may safely assume that there will be, before this winter is out, more than 1½ million men and women, boys and girls, able and willing to work, but prevented from doing so. The present depression began at the end of 1920 and shows no sign of lifting, and it is no longer sufficient for Ministers to prophecy improvement; even the most credulous workers are now unwilling to believe in the early coming of the long deferred revival.

There is no lack of freaks, frauds and cranks anxious to gain attention for their fallacious diagnoses and quack remedies—free traders and protectionists, and advocates of imperial preference; deflationists and inflationists, Christians preaching Brotherhood, and others who want another war, bareheaded Daily Mailites, and their ridiculous Liberal Labour opponents, who weep for the wrongs inflicted on the poor German capitalists, emigrationists, and last and most futile of all, the motley crowd of "Socialists," who have time for these and every vain scheme, but no time for Socialism. We, on the other hand, urge now, as we have always urged, that there is a solution—Socialism; that it is the only solution; and that it is a solution for the present and not for the distant future.

The attempted explanations of unemployment are as varied as the suggested remedies, and it is necessary therefore to make clear a few important points. First, do not be misled by those who have tried to

saddle Poincaré with the responsibility. The widespread unemployment began in 1920 and had reached a point in 1922 higher than at any other time since; yet the French occupation of the Ruhr did not take place until January, 1923.

Do not believe that it is an "abnormal" after-war development. Apart from earlier times of special distress due to political and economic disturbances, unemployment has been a constant feature of our system since the industrial revolution at the end of the 18th century. There has during that period always been a mass of employable but unemployed workers; the number increasing enormously during trade depressions and decreasing with trade prosperity. It never wholly disappeared, in spite of the big drain of emigration to America and the Colonies. Dr. Macnamara, M.P., speaks of a normal pre-war unemployed army of 200,000 persons (*Times*, 11th September, 1923.) Unemployment is a *normal* feature of capitalist production. And what of the future? Macnamara promises that

"that even if the unsettlement of Europe were ended and normal trade returned, the permanent unemployment in this country would be three or four times as big as in pre-war times."

While Sir John Norton Griffiths, M.P., a Tory, tells us (*Daily Herald*, 11th April, 1923):—

"We have now got, and always, apparently, will have . . . trade boom or no trade boom . . . a million or more unemployed men who cannot be absorbed in industry."

Neither Macnamara nor Norton Griffiths seems greatly perturbed, but it may be worth your while to consider carefully the prospect before you.



Refuse to be drawn by the Labour leaders into the free trade-protectionist controversy, for it does not concern you. It is no question of principle, but one of capitalist interests, and will be readily scrapped by those who teach you to worship it, when profit-making demands a new policy. The sudden conversion of the traditionally free-trade Bradford woollen industry illustrates this. Moreover free trade is an illusion in the modern world. What does free trade mean to a cotton or soap combine which has a practical monopoly of raw material and the home market? What does free trade mean to an international meat or steel combine, which allocates to its members certain geographical areas and a certain percentage of the sales in the total markets? And remember that the inquiries instituted by the Government immediately after the war brought to light the fact that there is now hardly any important industry which is not controlled in some direction by a federation or central organisation.

Protection is in effect the state support of one industry at the expense of those who pay for the whole cost of administration, that is the capitalist class. Protection or direct subsidies cannot in the long run overcome the world conditions governing the whole mass of a country's trade, or better the position of the working class. A subsidy for agriculture, or a bar on the import of agricultural produce (advocated by a section of the Labour Party) will, it is true, stimulate the agricultural industry and lead to the employment of more workers there? But that is only one of the results. The production of more food at home means a decrease of the import of food products from abroad, and a corresponding decrease in coal or manufactured goods which would ordinarily have gone to pay for those imports. A mere transfer of some miners or cotton operatives to the ranks of the unemployed and the corresponding employment of a number of out-of-work agricultural labourers does not solve the problem of unemployment.

It resembles the emigration schemes which appear to rest on the notion that one can remove unemployment by migrating the unemployed from one country to another. It takes no account of the fact that the problem is a world problem, because this is obscured by certain temporary factors and local peculiarities.

Protectionist U.S.A., which two years ago had six million unemployed, strictly limits immigration, but this has not been the means of fulfilling the late President's fatuous wish that the boom of last year should be an era of "permanent prosperity." Depression is beginning there once more, and during 1922 alone no less than two million farmers and hands had to leave the land and resort to the industrial towns, to swell the unemployed army. Their chief immediate trouble was that there is too much wheat in the world for the capitalist system to dispose of, and yet some of our Labour men still believe that the panacea for agricultural stagnation at home is to grow more wheat!

Canada has its own problem to face, and cannot even find work for all of a few thousand men who were enticed out there for the harvesting. Unemployment is acute and growing in South Africa, where it is also complicated by the racial hostility between the relatively highly paid (and out-of-work) whites, and the low paid blacks. The South African unemployed actually asked to be migrated to Australia to join the ranks of the unemployed there, many of them want to come "home" to England. South Africa is also asking for immigrants—"with £2,000 capital."!

France has but little unemployment, because she has remained largely an agricultural country, with a land system of peasant proprietorship. There are relatively few wage-earners, the only ones liable to suffer unemployment, and for some time past French industry, especially textiles, has been doing big trade abroad at the expense of English exporters, owing to the depreciation of the franc. This has led to an amusing clash between one brand of currency-mongers, who want to save us by raising the £ sterling to par, and another brand who can see the millennium in lowering it until Bradford mill owners can undersell French cloths. However, to the extent that French trade prospers and stimulates development of industry (including the Ruhr industries) France, too, will become more and more dependent on the state of world trade, and her growing army of factory workers will be drawn into the pool of, potentially, surplus labour.

It is also quite wrong to suppose that

unemployment is a product of over-population. Sir William Beveridge, at the British Association, dealt with this, and quoted elaborate statistics to show that

"Man for his present troubles had to accuse neither the niggardliness of Nature nor his own instinct of reproduction."—"Daily Telegraph," 18/9/23.)

Unemployment, he said, was "a function of the organisation and methods of industry, not of its size."

The British Government has announced its policy of authorising the expenditure of £50,000,000 on relief works for the coming winter. This, in face of the evident hopelessness of expecting any important trade revival in the near future, is merely an admission of the failure of the capitalist class to solve the problem. It is just a form of relief without, what is from their viewpoint, the drawback of idleness, leading to a loss of the habit of work. The capitalists as a whole, and their thinkers and apologists, are in the same fatalistic state of mind as one individual employer who was recently declared a bankrupt. He ascribed his failure to his anxiety not to dismiss some old employees although he had no work for them. He just "hoped" that "something would turn up." It didn't for him, and it won't for the system as a whole. Nor is there any hope from Labour Governments. Labour Governments in Australia (including the one still left) were just as helpless as any other; they used precisely the same methods to reduce wages when prices fell, and treated the resistance of the workers with the usual brutality. Unemployment is as rife in Queensland as in any other capitalist state, and as little is done for them. In fact the unemployed are better off under our own Government.

The Australian capitalists, like those here and elsewhere, continually have one consideration in mind. At all costs the workers must be kept from determined discontent. First promises, flattery, or the illusive benefits of Labour Governments are tried, then the paltry bribe of relief and doles, and finally, if nothing else will serve, the open violence of the armed forces of law and order.

Our explanation of the problem is simpler than any of these. It may from one aspect be summed up in the statement that the

inability of 1½ million British workers to find work although they wish to do so, is due to the frank determination of another million persons not on any account to spoil their pleasant lives by painful toil. You work because it is your only means of getting the means of living. The things you need are the result of the application of your labour to the natural resources, but because these natural resources, along with the railways, the factories and steamships, etc., are privately owned by a small class of wealthy persons, they can and do live without having to work, and they possess the power not only to appropriate the proceeds of your labour, but also when they think fit to prevent you from working at all. In the early days of capitalism these people justified their rents and profits by the services they rendered. But by now they have, as a class, long ceased to render those services. Landowners are no longer the pioneers in agricultural science, they do not lead the way in raising the technique of the industry, or in encouraging their tenants to better methods of production. They lost 35 years ago their last semblance of being a necessary part of the machinery of government, when in 1888 the Justices of the Peace were all but abolished, and their powers handed over to the elected county councils. Industrial capitalists do not now bring brains, enterprise or directive ability to industry; these functions are mainly exercised by salaried officials, members of the working class. Far from promoting economic development, the growing tendency is for the controllers of the chief industries to restrict production in order to save themselves from the world shrinkage of markets. As for the so-called "risks" of capital, it is a commonplace for big business when in difficulties to get the State to help them out and take the risk from their shoulders.

The problem of permanent unemployment arises out of this one fact of private ownership. The owners return to the working class as wages an amount which will purchase only part of the total product. The balance cannot be consumed entirely by the owners and must in any event first be sold. The manufacturer of cotton cloth, for instance, might as well be propertyless as to have on his hands a great amount of unsaleable goods. To sell there must be markets, and owing to the rapid industrialisation of the last 50 years there is now rela-



tively little demand for the manufactured products of the advanced nations.

The competition for the markets causes wars, but far from solving these only aggravate the problem. During the artificial prosperity of war time great strides are made in powers of production, and when peace comes the glut is worse than ever. The Right Hon. C. A. McCurdy, M.P., writing in the *Daily Chronicle* (14th September) pointed out that the steel industry of this country after the war was developed much above the demand of the market for its products. And it is foolish to suppose that trade depression and unemployment can be avoided by reducing wages or by lowering the cost of production in any other way. The enormous wage reductions in Great Britain which followed the Labour leaders' campaign for increased production, certainly did not stem the tide of unemployment. And if it were true that lower prices would cause a trade revival, the capitalists are perfectly free now to lower their prices by cutting into profits. They would do so if this policy would lead to a corresponding increase of sales. But the world economic position is such that no reduction of prices would cause any appreciable increase in demand. In fact in many industries (cotton for instance) this has been clearly realised, and the policy is being followed of deliberate and agreed restriction of output in order to raise prices. Sir Charles Macara stated this explicitly for the cotton trade (*Business Organisation*, March, 1923). He argues that the loss of foreign markets led to cut-throat competition at home without any material growth in home sales. The producers sold no more by lowering prices and merely sacrificed profits. It has been said that the Capital Levy, by reducing taxation, would enable manufacturers to sell cheaper, and thus would revive trade. The argument is fallacious, because it assumes that capitalists who now do not reduce prices, would do so then; ignoring the fact that they could do so now if they wished, and that they would not be compelled to do so then if they did not wish. They do not reduce now because it does not pay to do so, and unless the world situation as a whole were changed, it would still not pay them to do so after a Capital Levy. Assuming a reduction in taxation occurred, only profits would benefit.

If then, as we say, unemployment is a necessary adjunct of capitalist production, there is only one remedy. The workers must deprive the capitalist class of their ownership and control of the means of production. Once made the common property of society, they can be used for the purpose of satisfying society's needs; not the unstable demands of a market, but the direct human needs of the people.

For the application of this solution only one thing is lacking. The political machinery exists through which the workers can constitutionally express and enforce their will. The knowledge of the productive process in all its branches is contained within the ranks of the working class. But the majority of the workers still support the capitalist system of society. The Socialist party is doing all it can to undermine that trust in capitalism, and it invites the immediate and active assistance of all workers who recognise the accuracy of our contention, that there is no future for our class except in Socialism. H.

Under the Auspices of the Hackney Branch

### SELECT WHIST DRIVE

will be held at

Fairfax Hall, Stanhope Gardens, HARRINGAY

On Monday, Nov. 26th & Wednesday, Dec. 5th, 1923.

DOORS OPEN 7.30 P.M.

COMMENCE 8 P.M.

TICKETS ONE SHILLING.

### HANDSOME PRIZES.

The Proceeds of the first Drive will go to the Hackney Branch Fund.

The proceeds of the Second Drive to go to the £1000 Fund.

## PUBLIC MEETING

A LECTURE

will be delivered at

BROMLEY PUBLIC HALL,

BOW ROAD, E.,

On Sunday, November 18th, at 8 p.m.

SUBJECT:

Political v. Direct Action.

Speaker—A. JACOBS.

### BY THE WAY.

"Many working-men who voted Socialist would be the last to wish to see Socialism enthroned."—(Dr. Macnamara, "Daily Sketch," 24/9/23.)

A not unusual method of the capitalist vote-catching tout is to flatter and cajole the worker under the pretence of appealing to his "sound common sense," his "level headed reasoning," his desire to preserve his "hard won liberties," all of which he unfortunately hasn't got. We presume the pedantic doctor refers to those workers who voted for the reform programme of the Labour Party in the belief that they voted for "Socialism." Those who did so were deceived and sold again, as they so often have been before by Liberal and Tory frauds. The full realisation of the programme of the Labour Party would still leave the workers propertyless in the means of life, and consequently slaves to their masters. They (the workers) do not want to see Socialism established because they do not understand it. Dr. Macnamara is a defender of capitalism, and would have you believe that your continued toleration of that system is the outcome of your own power to reason. Our claim is that the workers' support of capitalism, with the inevitable social misery it brings upon them, is not due to their calm and careful consideration, but to the slavish ideas inculcated by their master's education.

Have no fear of bogeys styled "Socialism," but critically examine our position, apply the intelligence you so often use in your master's interests, and then, with your new-born understanding, join us. Time and truth are on our side, but we can only achieve our objective through you, our class organised —

\* \* \*

"Do you want a bigger salary?" "Do you want to get on?" "Why not climb above the sloughs of unemployment?" Such are the inferential questions addressed to the salaried proletariat by various schools and colleges claiming to supply the necessary qualifications. The Pelman Institute advertising their course through the medium of Baroness Orczy state (*Tit-Bits*, 22/9/23): "There are millions to whom it would mean just the difference between a life of mediocrity and one of prosperity." What glorious news!—almost brings tears to the eyes to think that there should be so many

millions, who, it might appear, are living drab, uneventful lives out of sheer perversity. But even the capitalist press reveals a different state of affairs and shatters the fulsome promises of those whose business it is to trade in a particular form of knowledge required by the masters of to-day. Like the mass of the working class the products of the higher education must come into the labour market and compete in the merciless struggle that our present social system begets.

"During the next few months some thousands of young men from Oxford and Cambridge will be looking for work in an inhospitable world. 'The truth is that there is less and less room in modern life for a liberal education,' said a former undergraduate (who had somehow found a job since 'coming down' last summer) sadly to a 'Daily News' representative yesterday. The most fortunate of these young men—that is those who have not absolutely got to earn a living at once—will drift to the Bar, with comparatively little prospect of briefs. The less fortunate will become schoolmasters, most of them with neither aptitude nor enthusiasm for their work. And there will still be a lot left over. These will scramble for odd tutorships—an occupation which is usually quite as fatal a 'blind alley' as that of a telegraph boy—and try to become free lance journalists. Perhaps some lucky ones will get jobs on the films."—(*Daily News*, 28/6/23.)

Perhaps! and more than likely, some unlucky ones will join the ever-growing army of the workless. The capitalists themselves will see that the quantity and quality of so-called educated workers is forthcoming for the purposes of their own profit, and, like the rest of the working class, their supply exceeding the masters' requirements, their price upon the labour market (salary or wages) consequently falls. We too seek to educate the workers, not as trained machines, producing and distributing wealth for the enjoyment and leisure of others, but to understand their usefulness and importance, using that knowledge to establish society upon a basis that will allow them to enjoy the results of that usefulness in increasing physical and mental comfort. Such education is indeed worthy of the name, for it has for its objective a higher social order, in which productive human effort will be in conformity with the greatest good of all.

\* \* \*

"A railway carriage which used to take six weeks to construct, can now be completed in six days."—(*Sunday Chronicle*, 23/9/23.)

Certainly a splendid item of information



—but not for the railway coach builders, their labourers, or for other sections of the workers for that matter. Small wonder that the above is

“viewed with the natural suspicion of workers who are afraid that machinery will rob them of a living.”—(Same report.)

Not a suspicion indeed, but a reality—as many workers in other industries could testify, and as other items from the same report bear evidence, for instance:—

“A railway wagon loaded with timber runs in on ordinary metals and stops beside an inclined conveyor. On the conveyor the planks are thrown. Formerly ten men carried the deals away on their shoulders, the conveyor and two men empty a wagon in 15 minutes. . . . There is a bolt machine, for instance, which can turn out 40,000 bolts a day; its predecessors output was 1,600”

No doubt the displaced workers will be able to ruminate upon the wonders of labour saving machinery they and other members of their class invent, produce, and operate—in their master's interest. What insanity! All the means to make life easier, all the possibilities of reducing work to a minimum, but under capitalism only to serve the idle few, the owners of those means. The cause of your uncertain and insecure existence is plain to see, it becomes more obvious as the years go by, and means greater insecurity, increasing monotony of work, and an ever growing army of unemployed. The docker, the sailor, the cotton operative, all alike serve as wage hirelings for the purpose of profit and dividend, and all must eventually seek the same way out, the abolition of the privately owned means of life, supplanted by communal ownership by and through their own class concerted action. It is the only way.

\* \* \*

Speaking as a delegate to the Congregational Union at Northampton, Dr. A. R. Henderson said (*Westminster Gazette*, 3-10-23):—

“In many cities and towns there were housing conditions which made decency impossible in these slum areas a morally satisfactory social life was impossible. The separation of employers and employed into hostile groups eager to gain an advantage over each other was one of the most sinister facts of our social life. . . . Two courses were open to the Churches. They could so improve the conditions of the present system, that it shall give a fair opportunity to all, or they could abolish it in favour of some form of Socialism.”

It is not uncommon to-day to read such

outbursts emanating from people, partly from a sincere desire to alleviate such misery, and partly from the increasing difficulty of explaining away the existence of such conditions as being merely temporary inconveniences that will vanish in future as the outcome of wise legislation, or the contrition of a once callous master class. Dr. Henderson inclines toward the latter thought. He says: “Employers knew very well what was wrong, and how to set it right if they would.” What these more or less well-meaning people fail to understand is the cause of these conditions, and their relation to the system in which they are an inseparable part. William Morris once aptly observed that: “The workers are poorly housed because they are poor,” and it would be equally true to say that they are poorly fed, clothed, educated and entertained, by the very fact that they are members of the working class; a class who at present are content to fashion a perpetual panorama of pleasure for their idle masters, whilst themselves remaining content with the crumbs; and why—why in the name of common sense—should the capitalists, even were it possible for them to do so, be expected to modify their system so as to “give a fair opportunity to all,” a system admitted by Dr. Henderson to rest upon class exploitation, and class oppression. Years and years of reforms have not prevented a worsening of the workers' condition, neither can it be shown how reforms of the future can remove the cause of those conditions, they would not fundamentally alter the relation of Capitalist and wage worker, and if masquerading as a form of “Socialism,” could only be in such guise to delay the advent of Socialism a system in which class domination would cease to be. Only the working class themselves, understanding Socialism, and organised for its establishment, can end capitalism. It is their task, not their masters'.

MAC.

### LEEDS AND DISTRICT.

Will those interested in the formation of a Branch in the above area communicate with

E. Boden,  
5, East Parade,  
Harrowgate.

### THE CAPITAL LEVY.

To the Editor of THE SOCIALIST STANDARD.

DEAR SIR,

With regard to the article on the Capital Levy, I would like you to answer the following questions:—

I agree that all taxes are paid by the rich, and come out of surplus value. The robber pays taxes with the wealth he has robbed. But if taxes go to pay for working-class education, old age pensions, etc., then it is the robbers who are made to pay for services rendered to the workers. So that taxation may be used as a lever by the workers to recover some of the wealth taken from them.

Now again, if the Capital Levy, instead of being used to relieve taxation, is used to pay for more and better social services—then the Capital Levy will help the workers.

It is surer to help the workers than higher wages, because the sliding scale—the fodder basis—neutralises higher wages; while social services cannot be neutralised so easily.

The Capital Levy can be used to pay for the land, and instruments of distribution and exchange socialised. To pay means with the money levied from the whole of the capitalist class—the only class that can be levied.

Thanking you,

Yours, etc.,

R. NELT

### REPLY TO MR. NELT.

Mr. Nelt sets out to explain how taxation (or a special form of it, the Capital Levy) “may be used as a lever by the workers to recover some of the wealth taken from them.” He is, however, not logical in his argument. He says quite correctly that the capitalist class pay for education, old age pensions, etc. Then, without any explanation, he alters “pay” into “are made to pay.” The latter, if it were true, would support his argument, the former, which is true, does not. The capitalist class levy themselves to pay for social services, and being in control of the political machinery they decide the form and the amount of the taxation, and the objects to which the revenue shall be devoted. While the workers

continue their present attitude of indifference and actual opposition to their own interests, the capitalists will have just that amount of freedom they now possess to order their affairs as they choose. They will tax themselves as they like, and spend their money on whatever object seems good to them. If the workers had the will and the power to destroy capitalism it would be silly to waste that power on the minor reforms Mr. Nelt proposes; while both will and power are lacking it is impossible to “make” the capitalists do even these small things.

Let me also remind Mr. Nelt that the primary object of the Levy, as advocated by Mr. Pethick Lawrence and the Labour Party generally, is not to increase, but to lower taxation. “It could not be justified except for the purpose of debt reduction.” (Mr. Snowden, *Morning Post*, 28th June, 1923.) Perhaps Mr. Nelt may imagine that after the advent of a Labour Government taxes really would be levied with the deliberate intention of plundering the capitalist on behalf of the workers. Mr. Snowden disposes of that also, and at the same time supports our view that the capitalist system will be as strong and as safe after a Labour victory as before.

“If, of course, the commercial classes and those who would have to contribute to a Capital Levy will not have it, but prefer to go on paying a high income tax without any hope of any substantial reduction, they must bear it, and a Labour Government would have to look in other directions than the Capital Levy for revenue to enable the food taxes to be removed, the income tax on moderate incomes to be reduced and to finance schemes of social reform.”

It is obvious, too, that if capitalist opposition will be able to make the Labour Government give up the Capital Levy, the capitalist will then, as now, dictate their own programme of social reform.

H.

### WISDOM FROM THE PAST.

“It may be laid down for an undeniable truth, that where all work nobody will want, and to promote this would be a greater charity and more meritorious than to build hospitals, which very often are but so many monuments of ill-gotten riches, attended with late repentance.”

WM. PETTY, 1699.



## OFFICIAL NOTICE.

All communications for the Executive Committee, Subscriptions for the SOCIALIST STANDARD, Articles, and Correspondence submitted for insertion therein, should be addressed—The Socialist Party of Great Britain, 17, Mount Pleasant, London, W.C.1, to whom Money Orders should be made payable. The meetings of the Executive Committee are held at the Head Office, every Tuesday, at 7.30 p.m.

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## The Socialist Standard,

NOVEMBER



1923

## DISASTER FROM PROFIT AND PROFIT FROM DISASTER.

The risks of capital! How often are the dividends of the idle justified on the plea that the investor is entitled to a "fair" return on the capital he has "risked"? When workers ask for an increase in the beggarly pittance they receive as wages then risks on the workers' part are forgotten, and "what the industry can stand" becomes the watchword; the first charge on industry being an adequate return on the capital invested.

In the inquiry into the coal industry of a few years back employers spoke much of the risks of capital and but little of the risks of the wage worker. The fate of the bulk of the 42 miners entombed in the Redding Pit, Falkirk, on September 25th, is an illustration of the risks the workers run; they risk their lives, and they do so merely for bread and butter. Not only does the miner risk his life, but the miner's family risks the loss of its mainstay.

Disaster after disaster have overtaken the mine workers, due in the main (as instance the Whitehaven disaster some years ago) to the cheese-paring economy of the mine owners in their desire to extract the maximum of profit out of the coalmining industry. And yet, in spite of the ever-present dangers to limb and life, the miner

only gets in return for his labour, in the best of cases, little more than sufficient to keep himself and his dependants from actual starvation.

In mine and factory, and on the seas, the workers risk their lives daily in order that capital may have a "fair" profit. Not in order that society may obtain the necessities of life; because where profit is not forthcoming the wheels of industry cease to turn, though society may be groaning for the goods that do not come.

Disasters to humanity are often but sources of profit for the ghouls that control this misery-making function of wealth.

The earthquake in Japan that caused so much havoc a short time ago provides an instance of how precious property is in the eyes of its owners, and also how the economic advantages of a disaster become of more importance to capitalists than pity for misery suffered.

Only a little while ago we read harrowing tales of Japanese misery and a cry was raised to help those who suffered from the earthquake. Later information, however, reduces the protestations to a sham.

The *Manchester Guardian Weekly* of October 12th publishes an article from their correspondent in Kobe on the "Economic Effects of the Earthquake," which opens up with the following paragraph:—

"The immediate economic consequence of the earthquake is that 1,500 Europeans have come into Kobe, where a somewhat smaller number have fed, lodged, and clothed them. And no sooner were they comforted, than they organised two 'expeditions' (neither of which has sailed at the time of writing, exactly one week after the earthquake) to proceed to Yokohama and protect not only what movable property may have escaped the fire and the enterprising looter (who soon had the military on his track), but titles to land and so forth" (italics ours).

How much more important in the eyes of these gentlemen was private property than the misery of the poor Japanese, whom they appear to have forgotten!

A further quotation from this correspondent should interest those who believe in the idealism of the profit-seeking capitalist.

"Of course, between profiteering and ruin the authorities are between the devil and the deep sea. If they have reconstruction they must let the profiteer get his percentage. It is a necessary part of the capitalist system. Big firms here have been advised that the earthquake here had no sooner happened than Japanese in England did their best to get a good grip on the metal market, but not very successfully. Everybody is on the watch for

developments, and there is, in spite of the slump, quite a tense awaiting of the revival. The revival of Tokio means the rebuilding of Yokohama. It would be a disaster if, because of temporary embarrassments, British holders of original perpetual leases or even those of ordinary leases were to be forced to sell their holdings, as this would be a blow to British trade. It would be inadvisable for the Government to subsidise them as one subsidy only leads to another. But it is worth while for British firms to lay out money to gain or maintain a footing in the trade that is to come."

In the eyes of the capitalist, then, the most important fact arising out of the earthquake is not the misery it has brought to those involved in the earthquake, but the profit it promises to those who "risk" their capital.

What a monster is this capital, brother, that it grows fat out of human misery, and dulls in its owners the human feeling of pity! Doth it not reek with the blood of our fellows, and is it not time that the monster was buried? Then join with us in digging the grave and burying for ever the exploitation of the many by the few, and with it all the misery and suffering that capital has called into existence.

## THE WORKERS' KNIGHT-MARE.

The following extracts from an article in the *Birmingham Daily Mail* (8/5/23) indicate the usefulness of reforms to the capitalists, and show the necessity which confronts them of adjusting the mechanism of their system to meet the requirements which its development calls for:—

"Everyone recognises that the present State scheme of unemployment insurance is a temporary expedient for tiding over a severe crisis. Nevertheless, it has served one useful purpose, writes Sir Robert Hadfield, the well-known Sheffield steel manufacturer. It has proved that in the future insurance against unemployment must inevitably form part of our industrial policy. The removal of the fear of short time and complete unemployment is as essential to industrial progress as is the invention of labour-saving machinery. In fact, it is a necessary corollary to our national progress."

In the above Sir Robert Hadfield admits that labour-saving machinery and industrial progress bring as an inevitable consequence unemployment; he foresees that there must be hopes of better conditions engendered among the workers, otherwise their growing discontent may become a serious obstacle to "industrial" and "national progress." If these cant phrases of the various captains of industry who continually lecture the working class were critically examined, the conclusion arrived at by the

latter would be that industrial progress means increased wealth for the capitalist class, but intensification of misery for the workers.

"With a steadily increasing population and our well-recognised dependence on overseas markets, the well-being of the population of Great Britain depends on a steady improvement in industrial efficiency. This can be attained only by improved methods of production. Those improved methods will be resisted actively and passively, by the workers unless they have some real guarantee that their standard of living, as represented by the purchasing power of their wages, will not be depressed thereby."

Efficiency! For what reason? To enable your masters to acquire greater wealth in a shorter time than previously. But that is not the only reason, for the national groups of capitalists are fully aware that increased efficiency and improved production are the necessary outcome of the struggle for trade; this struggle has now become so keen that each group is more than ever determined to speed up their workers and exploit them to the utmost. The result is that the markets become overstocked with commodities, a slump sets in, there is increased unemployment, and there follows keen competition between workers for jobs, resulting in the lowering of wages and deterioration of their standard of living. Also through the speeding up processes and the general fetishism of efficiency, physical and mental breakdowns will become a more frequent occurrence. These mishaps will, of course, make work for the penny-in-the-slot panel doctor.

"The increased scale of benefits introduced when the scope of insurance was widened to cover practically all industries was not so much a concession to fit the increased cost of living as a recognition of the need for provision of more adequate maintenance for the workers in times of enforced idleness. That need has been voiced repeatedly in the demand for 'work or maintenance.' Whether that will ever come within the region of practical politics is open to question. Meanwhile the problem must be dealt with on much less ambitious lines for which the existing State scheme will probably serve as a basis."

There appears to be some contradiction here, for if we refer back it will be seen that Sir Robert deprecates any reduction in the standard of living as represented by wages, but now we find that something much less ambitious than "work or maintenance" must suffice; evidently that "real guarantee" amounts to words, words only.

"The estimate was recently given in the House of Commons that against a regular unemployment



roll of 200,000 in pre-war days we must calculate on provision for 600,000 in the future. To contemplate with equanimity an industrial condition wherein half the present number of unemployed must be described as unemployable, would mean that industry was entirely bankrupt of ideas, and altogether selfish in outlook both on the employing and employed side. Even the bitterest protagonists of both sides would hesitate to pronounce so sweeping a verdict."

The reader can now see to what a pass industrial and national progress has brought the workers, for the present number of unemployed (one million, two hundred thousand) appears to have become a normal condition of the present system, and no doubt Sir Robert Hadfield voices the uneasiness of the capitalist class, or that section who apprehend danger to the smooth working of the capitalist system, which such a vast number of unemployed portends. He is evidently desirous of trying every means to arrive at a settled position, chiefly through agreement with the organised trades, who are asked to link themselves up with their enemies to help to reform, and thus acquiesce in a system which should be overthrown. In reference to "selfishness" of outlook the workers may just as well face the facts, viz.: that material interests dominate action, that employers and workers have interest antagonistic to each other, that the employers are suiting their "selfish" interests in diverting the workers' attention from that antagonism by talk of betterment and reform of social conditions. That is all that selfishness implies in this instance, although Sir Robert would cunningly desire the workers to think that selfishness, i.e., action along the lines of material interests, is not in accord with capitalism.

"Present indications point to the permanence of some kind of State scheme of unemployment insurance. The difficulties accurately defining the boundary lines of specific trades are the greatest barrier to the ideal system—insurance by industry itself. Even if the provision of the benefit were entirely a State concern, and its administration purely an industrial matter, many of the criticisms of the existing scheme would be met. Contributions could still be paid as at present but the distribution of benefits would be left to the employers or the trade union, or both. The unemployed would then be dealing entirely with their own employer or trade union officials, and would thus keep in close touch with the active agencies for the promotion of employment."

It matters nothing to the unemployed whether the benefit is paid by the State, the employers, or the trade union, there will be just as much haggling and appearing before

committees; and men and women will still be suspended from benefits or written off as "Not Genuinely Seeking Work." It is apparent that the appeal is made to enlist the sympathies of the trade union members, for it is clear to the far-seeing capitalist that once these accept the principle of reform it will then be easier to get the remainder of the working class to follow suit. The trade unions will then in very truth be merely intermediaries for the supply of labour-power, and their branches pay-out offices for unemployed workers. As to being in touch with the active agencies for the promotion of employment, that will not bring the workers any nearer to their desire, for obviously the employer will only engage men when he requires them, and it will be useless for the trade union officials to send men after jobs that do not exist. At the present time any firm has only to advertise one vacancy, and there will be scores of applicants. In many cases, firms have established labour bureaux where names of applicants are registered. This constitutes a direct menace and threat to those within the factory. Sir Robert has no solution for the problem, which "is so complex that to expect a Government Department to evolve a system which will satisfy all demands is to hope for the unattainable." He suggests "that industry itself in each of its component parts must set on foot an inquiry into its own potentialities and needs. Its employers can readily gain access to all the necessary facts regarding capital, machine equipment, and so on: its trade unions could without difficulty lay their hands on all the necessary information regarding the workers' side of the question."

In short, fellow-workers, you are asked to take part in a movement which if you are wise you will spurn. The progress of the capitalist system is not your concern, but the acquisition of knowledge that will lead you to overthrow it, is most important. The capitalist class are compelled from time to time to adjust by reforms the anomalies that arise within their system, but many workers are led to believe by astute captains of industry or wily Labour leaders that these reforms and adjustments are made entirely in the interests of the working class. If the latter are cajoled into joint action or agreement with their enemies, they will be acting contrary to their real interests. The Socialist Party of Great Britain is the only

party that places Socialism forward as the solution of present evils, for the workers will only be freed from those evils when their cause, capitalism, is abolished. The working class must grip the fact that the capitalist system, itself a result of historical development, has evolved means of producing wealth which, if democratically controlled by the whole of the people, would give useful work to the able, leisure, comfort, and happiness to all mankind. It remains to the workers to bring an end to a system wherein they are looked down upon as Calibans of whom the Prosperos say:

"He does make our fire,  
Fetch in our wood and serves in offices  
That profit us,"

and contemptuously call forth at will as Prospero to Caliban—

"What ho! slave! Caliban!  
Thou earth, thou!"

E.J.

### WEEVILS AND FAME.

"The American Cotton Problem" is the subject of an article in the *Observer* (15/7/23) by the Financial Editor. Sir E. Mackay Edgar, Chairman of Crosses and Winkworth Consolidated Mills, is given a powerful pat on the back for his prediction of a year ago that a famine in American cotton was coming.

During the last 17 years America has produced about 60 per cent. of the world's cotton supply. Latterly there has been a falling off in America's production, and in 1921 and 1922 American production has fallen to 54 per cent. and 56 per cent. respectively of the world's production.

While the production of cotton has fallen, its consumption has risen. The article points out:

"The United States is already expanding her textile trade and her consumption of cotton measured by her spindle capacity is much greater than that of the United Kingdom. She is also increasing her spindleage and to an extent that should occasion alarm in the industry in Great Britain."

Poor Lancashire! First India started pinching her Indian trade, and now America is trying to pinch her American trade. What base ingratitude!

The fall in cotton production and increase in its consumption keeps cotton prices high, and hence the squeals of Lancashire.

A large share in causing the cotton shortage is laid at the door of the boll

weevil, whose method of sustaining life consists of destroying the cotton plant. But there is a weevil of another brand that also affects cotton production, but its object is the sustaining of profit.

From Professor Milhaud's "Enquiry on Production—General Report," we learn that:

"The situation with regard to cotton has been exactly the same. In December, 1920, the production of Japan was already reduced by 40 per cent., and further reductions were contemplated. In Egypt it was the public authorities themselves who took the initiative. The provincial councils unanimously decided to restrict the cultivation of cotton for 1921. In accordance with this decision the Sultan signed a decree on December 7th ordering that the area under cotton should be reduced by two-thirds and prohibiting the cultivation of cotton in upper Egypt except in the parts irrigated by the Nile."

"The American Cotton Growers' Association succeeded in bringing about the largest percentage of reduction on record in the production of cotton. This Association boasted of the firm and vigorous attitude of the bankers of the whole of the cotton-growing districts, who refused to grant the necessary advances and credits to enable the cultivation of enough cotton to ensure a normal crop."

The *Cotton News* (1/6/21), referring to the restriction in the use of artificial manures in the cotton growing States along the east bank of the Mississippi, states:

"which means to say that the growth and ripening of the new crop will be impeded and, furthermore, that the crop, already greatly restricted as regards the area under cultivation, will be seriously handicapped during the growing season. That applies even in those cases where the climatic conditions would be otherwise favourable."

"A similar policy has been applied by the International Federation of Linen Manufacturers, comprising the linen manufacturers of France, England, Holland, Belgium, Ireland, and Denmark, who declared at their meeting held at Brussels on November 18th, 1920, that the most important consideration was to restrict production and stabilise the market."

Sir E. Mackay Edgar is a director in a large concern, and we are frequently informed that upon such men we depend for the carrying on of large industries, where an intimate knowledge of world affairs (not supposed to be possessed by we lesser mortals) is essential. Can we therefore doubt that Sir E. Mackay Edgar was familiar with the facts quoted above? Then his prophecy may not have been so marvellous after all. How often does a man achieve fame on account of the blindness of others!

GILMAC.



**THE CAPITAL LEVY.**

To the Editor of THE SOCIALIST STANDARD.

SIR,

In response to your invitation to continue the discussion, it seems to me that there are three fundamental differences between us.

Firstly I hold that among the "economic forces" which under a capitalist system determine real net wages (i.e. the purchasing power of money wages) must be included the power exerted by capitalists through their possession of war loan. You apparently exclude this factor.

Secondly I hold that a levy on capital is a step towards ending the present system of wealth distribution which enables some individuals to live in idleness on the fruits of others' exertions. You apparently think, either that it would not be a step at all, or that it would be so small as not to be worth taking.

Thirdly I envisage the capital levy as one of the several reforms which will not only improve the immediate position of the workers, but will at the same time help to build up the new order of society necessary to take the place of the decaying capitalist system. You, I gather, regard such efforts at best as futile, and at worst as buttressing up the capitalist system and delaying its overthrow.

If I have correctly stated our respective standpoints there is nothing further to be said.

Yours, etc.,  
F. W. PETHICK LAWRENCE.

**REPLY.**

Mr. Pethick Lawrence says that "the power exerted by capitalists through their possession of war loan" is apparently excluded by me from the economic forces which determine real net wages. Now I readily agree that within the framework of the State, and subordinate to political control, which is the ultimate source of power, the accumulated wealth of the capitalists is an important factor in the struggle about the level of wages. But I do not see that it matters one jot whether that wealth exists as war loan, or whether it take some other form.

Lest it be said that this huge debt is the cause of present unemployment, let me re-

call two things: (1) that before the war we had some permanent unemployment, as well as protracted periods when it was acute; and (2) that France, with a like indebtedness, and a much worse financial position generally, has no unemployment.

If the Capital Levy meant a real appropriation of a large part of the wealth of the capitalists, there might be something in the argument, but in Mr. Pethick Lawrence's own words, "Payment of the levy will, in effect, be carried out by means of a reshuffling of the title deeds of wealth among wealthy persons. . . ." (*Forward*, May 5th, 1923).

This brings me to his second point. I still fail to see how this "reshuffling," which leaves the total wealth of the capitalist class untouched, and merely changes the form of some of it from war loan to industrial capital, can at the same time be a step towards the ending of the present system of wealth distribution. If the capitalists lose nothing, from what source do the workers gain?

As for the last point, Mr. Pethick Lawrence has not yet answered the charge that the levy, if successful, would buttress up the capitalist system. Assuming that a capitalist state were in dire need of some measure to re-establish its financial stability, then it seems obvious to me that a capital levy which served this purpose would strengthen the hands of the capitalist class, and give new life to the system on whose continuance their privileged position depends.

Actually I think that it is unlikely that the British capitalists can now have any use for the levy. At the time, just after the war, when it might have proved very useful to them, they were not ready to accept it, and now the need has largely passed.

H.

**COMMODITIES AND QUIDS.**

Liverpool, Sept. 12th, 1923.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain,  
17 Mount Pleasant, London, W.C.1.

DEAR COMRADE,

I note that J.F. passes over the important points I make, and resorts to hair splitting. This only makes his case worse, and puts

him deeper in the mire. For example, he charges me with falsifying Marx by making him say that the sovereign is the general equivalent in Britain. My answer is that Marx proves it, both in his "Critique" and "Capital." He shows that the sovereign is the unit of value, the standard of price, and reflects the value of all commodities in Britain. He illustrates many of his points with the aid of the sovereign and its aliquot parts. We are forced to agree with him because it is our experience, go where we will in Britain, all commodities are quoted and exchanged in terms of the sovereign. What better proof does J.F. want?

J.F. says that I misuse the term "Law." Let us test this. Marx begins his great work thus: "The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails, presents itself as 'an immense accumulation of commodities,' its unit being a single commodity. Our investigation must therefore begin with the analysis of a commodity."

Here Marx is telling us that there are at least two kinds of wealth, commodity wealth being one. To find what distinguishes commodity wealth from other forms of wealth we must analyse and generalise commodities. By doing so we find the common factors which wealth in the form of commodities possesses, and which other forms of wealth do not possess. In other words, to generalise is to find the law. So you see I used the term in the right place, and in the right sense. I repeat that J.F. has never given us the laws whereby we can distinguish commodity wealth from wealth in general; if he did he would prove at the same time that a sovereign was a commodity!

If we are merely to take Marx's word for it, then he gives me the point at issue in his opening sentence; for it is plain that if all capitalist wealth is commodity wealth, then it is quite clear that a sovereign *must* be a commodity. So you see that J.F. is teaching anti-Marx without being able to prove his position. Before we can prove Marx to be correct we must be clear that although all capitalist wealth is commodity wealth, all commodity wealth is not capitalist wealth, just as all sparrows are birds, but all birds are not sparrows. The teacher cannot possibly make, or explain those subtle distinctions until he understands the laws which gives him his concepts of com-

modity wealth, and wealth in general. J.F. falls lamentably short in this respect.

J.F. says: "Outside of Britain the sovereign loses these various characteristics and becomes a mere piece of gold, which exchanges by weight, and is therefore no longer a sovereign. It is this simple fact that W.W. has failed to understand."

J.F. is quite right, I did not understand that gold exchanged by weight outside of Britain. I really thought that it was the labour, measured by time, embodied in a specific quantity of gold that made it exchange with other commodities, in definite ratios, everywhere. That labour was the source of *all* value, which manifested itself in exchange. Now J.F. informs me I am wrong; that it is gravity, and not labour, which makes commodities exchange in definite ratios, "outside Britain." I would fain ask J.F. what gives commodities their exchange value inside Britain, and if each sovereign does not contain the same weight of gold? I hope J.F. will give me the credit for knowing that if you change a thing's form it becomes something else. But is very evident from the above statement J.F. does not realise that if you change sovereigns into bullion, the bullion will have the same nature that the sovereigns had, namely, the nature of serving as the general equivalent internationally. Indeed it might be just possible that I am not so dense as J.F. would have his readers believe.

Regarding J.F.'s remarks about me saying that the slave and serf, being unable to produce surplus value. Evidently he is unaware that it is Marx that gives us the problem to solve: "For the conversion of his money into capital, therefore, the owner of money must meet in the market with the free labourer, free in the double sense, that as a free man he can dispose of his labour-power as his own commodity, and that on the other hand he has no other commodity for sale, is short of everything necessary for the realisation of his labour-power." *Capital* pp 187, 188, Kerr's.

That undoubtedly means that the slave and serf could not produce surplus value, for they had not a commodity to sell, not even their labour power. It also means that the small tradesman to-day, who owns his means of production, and is his own labour power, cannot produce surplus value, simply because he does not sell his labour power,



but uses it for his own benefit. A little investigation will show us that if he extend the working day beyond the necessary labour time—like the slave and serf—he will produce surplus products, but that does not mean that they contain surplus-value. As a Marxian teacher, J.F. should know all this, but evidently it is all news to him; and without giving it a thought he flies into print, and tells his readers that I am "Absurdly Incorrect." It would take us too far from the matter in hand to prove Marx to be correct, so J.F. had better get busy, and formulate the position for himself. In the meantime his job is to point out to his readers where Marx erred when he said capitalist wealth was commodity wealth, which, of course, includes the sovereign. I am afraid he has taken on a colossal task.

Yours fraternally,  
WM. WALKER.

### ANSWER TO W.W.

W.W. complains that "J.F. passes over the important points I make," but he carefully refrains from stating what those "points" were, and a reading of his letters fails to disclose them.

Twice in the discussion with W.W. we have pointed out that he failed to understand the difference between a sovereign and a mere piece of gold. He now admits that we are correct, and thus gives us our case in this dispute. It would seem, however, not only by his misuse of Marx's writings, but by his failure to notice the contradictions in his own statements, that it is not merely confusion of thought he suffers from, but intellectual incapacity to understand simple facts.

Thus in his sixth paragraph he says:—

"I hope J. F. will give me the credit for knowing that if you change a thing's form it becomes something else."

and yet two lines after he says:—

"If you change sovereigns into bullion, the bullion will have the same nature as the sovereigns had, namely, the nature of serving as the general equivalent internationally."

So the thing that changes remains the same!

In the September S.S. we pointed out that W.W.'s implication that Marx said the sovereign was the general equivalent, was false. W.W. now says that Marx proves it in his "Critique," and "Capital,"

but he does not give a single reference from either work to support his contention—simply because no such statement exists in those works. Probably Marx's view is most clearly shown in the table given at the end of his description of the evolution of the money-form of the general equivalent.

This is the fourth form in his analysis, and he calls it:—

#### D. The Money Form.

20 yards of Linen =	
1 Coat =	
10lb of Tea =	
40lb of Coffee =	
1 qtr of Corn =	
$\frac{1}{2}$ ton of Iron =	
X Commodity A =	2 ounces of gold.

("Capital" p. 80. Kerr.—Ed.)

W.W. now states definitely that sovereigns have "the nature of serving as the general equivalent internationally," thus showing not only a misunderstanding of Marx but a complete ignorance of foreign or international economic relations. Further evidence of this ignorance is shown in the paragraph where W.W. admits we are correct in stating that he does not understand the difference between a sovereign and a mere piece of gold, when he drags in the question of value—a point outside the whole discussion—and mixes up the basis of exchange between two or more commodities with the method adopted of deciding the unit of quantity of any one commodity. And here again he contradicts himself. He says that he thought that "it was the labour measured by time embodied in a specific quantity of gold that made it exchange with other commodities." (our italics.) And what is the "specific quantity" of gold? A certain weight of it. Therefore gold exchanges by weight, but sovereigns exchange by tale or number. Thus even in his attempt to drag the question of value into the discussion, W.W. has to contradict his own assertion and by using the term "specific quantity" brings forward the fact that gold exchanges by weight with other commodities.

Still more stupid is his endeavour to explain what he obviously does not understand, the term "law." Here he mixes up "law" with "definition." Outside of legal circles "law" is the term given to the invariable sequence of factors in a process; a "definition" describes essential

characteristics. To distinguish one form of wealth from another form of wealth requires a description of their essential characteristics. This is not "law" but "definition." And let us repeat. Twice we have given the definition of a commodity for his benefit, and he has not questioned that definition in any of his letters.

This stupidity, however, runs dangerously close to deliberate misrepresentation when he quotes the opening chapter of "Capital," and then says:—

"If we are merely to take Marx's word for it, then he gives me the point at issue in his opening sentence, for it is plain that if all capitalist wealth is commodity wealth then it is quite clear that a sovereign must be a commodity."

"If"—but unfortunately that "if" knocks W.W.'s case of cards to pieces. Turn to the quotation from "Capital" given by W.W. and one will be unable to find any such statement as "all capitalist wealth is commodity wealth," there; nor can it be found anywhere in Marx's writings, for it is untrue.

The apex of this muddlement is reached, perhaps, when W.W. quotes, from pp. 187-188 of "Capital," a sentence dealing solely with a factor of modern capitalism, and claims that this justifies his appalling ignorance of history. The best answer to this is to quote what Marx himself says on the matter.

"Capital has not invented surplus labour. Wherever a part of society possesses the monopoly of the means of production, the labourer free or not free, must add to the working time necessary for his own maintenance an extra working time in order to produce the means of subsistence for the owners of the means of production, whether this proprietor be the Athenian Noble Man, Etruscan theocrat, civis Romanus, Norman baron, American slave-owner, Wallachian Boyard, modern landlord, or capitalist."—"Capital," pp. 259-260, Kerr, ed.)

The originator of this discussion was seemingly satisfied with our answer to his question. W. W. with his inability to understand even the simplest of Marx's writings, blunders from one bombastic statement to another, and winds up with a claim to "prove Marx to be correct." Leaving aside the fact that Marx had already made this quite unnecessary by doing the job himself, one can only admire the courage, while deploring the want of wisdom, of W.W. attempting to tackle such a task.

J. F.

To the E.C.

October 16th, 1923.

DEAR COMRADES,

At a meeting of Hackney Branch, Friday, September 7th, a member of the branch reported that he had attended at a propaganda meeting of the Central Hackney Branch of the I.L.P., at Queen's Road, Dalston, on the previous Monday evening.

At that meeting the statement was made by the chairman that the S.P.G.B. had been challenged to a debate the week before, but had refused to accept. On hearing this statement, the aforesaid comrade intimated to the chairman that he would accept the challenge on behalf of the S.P.G.B., subject to the ratification by his E.C.

On receipt of the above report the Hackney Branch instructed their secretary to write the I.L.P. secretary, asking him to confirm challenge and state if the debate was to receive the backing of their Executive Committee, and further, to suggest time, place, title, and general conditions of debate. The branch instructions were carried out, and the I.L.P. were written on Tuesday, September 11th.

On October 1st the Hackney Branch received the following reply:—

COPY OF I.L.P. LETTER.

October 1st, 1923.

DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 11th ult., asking for a debate between our party and your organisation was dealt with by our E.C. on Friday last, and their decision was that no useful purpose would be served by the holding of such debate.

I am, yours faithfully,  
WILLIAM G. LOVE,  
Secretary.

## PUBLIC MEETING.

A LECTURE

will be delivered at

POPLAR TOWN HALL,  
NEWBY PLACE,

On Sunday, December 2nd, at 7.30 p.m.

SPEAKER—R. REYNOLDS.



**FUNDS.**

The winter is upon us, unemployment is widespread, thousands have the greatest difficulty in keeping the hunger-wolf from the door, owing to the smallness and uncertainty of the wages they obtain.

Under such conditions it must seem curious and even callous to the outsider to ask a worker to spare pence out of his pitiful pittance for Socialist propaganda.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain is made up of working men—the poorly paid and the unemployed. We are organised to overthrow the system that breeds overwork, poor pay and unemployment. Organisation needs funds.

Funds are necessary for instance for the following purposes: (1) the upkeep of the central office, in which the business of the organisation can be transacted, educational classes held, and so forth; (2) the printing expenses for the production of circulars, pamphlets, and the monthly journal—the "S.S."; (3) the obtaining of platforms and the hiring of halls for public meetings.

The above are some of the most important expenses incurred.

To meet these expenses our members pay what they can, but we are unable to subscribe sufficient ourselves to keep the party solvent. To meet the deficits we have collections at our meetings, and invite subscriptions to our Thousand Pound Fund. Up to the present we have been just able to scrape through, but we are rapidly reaching the point where we will be unable to scrape through. This is largely due to increased costs of printing, office expenses, decreasing collections, owing to the general depression, and the decreasing capacity of our members to subscribe.

The sequel can be easily understood. Unless more funds are forthcoming we will have to curb our activities still further, and possibly suspend publication of our monthly paper, THE SOCIALIST STANDARD.

Those who agree with our propaganda and desire to see the continued publication of THE SOCIALIST STANDARD, and also the printing of further pamphlets, are earnestly invited to do what they can in the way of subscribing to our funds, and extending the circulation of our literature.

**LIFE-LIKE PORTRAITS OF MARX & ENGELS.**

Handsome Cabinet Photographs suitable for framing. Price 1/6 the pair. Postage 3d. extra. To be had from S.P.G.B., 17, Mount Pleasant, London, W.C.1.

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**THE SOCIALIST PARTY  
OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great  
Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.



# THE Socialist Standard

The Official Organ of **THE SOCIALIST PARTY** of Great Britain.

No 232. Vol. 20.]

LONDON, DECEMBER, 1923.

[MONTHLY, TWOPENCE.]

## ELECTION MANIFESTO.

Fellow Workers,

Five years after the official ending of the "War to end War" we find the successful thieves still unable to agree upon an amicable division of the plunder. So fierce have been their quarrels that one of the "defeated" countries, Turkey, has emerged from the turmoil stronger, economically and territorially, than she was before the War!

Among the Allies France has been the only one with a direct and clear policy. This policy is the apparently simple one of smashing Germany and stealing the ore and coal areas of the Ruhr, the Saar Basin and Silesia. That, of course, will mean "no Reparations." But the ruling class in France are not much concerned over that. The policy mentioned suits them best.

France is more than half an agricultural country, but her peasants are scattered, difficult to organise, and slow to move together. The Industrial capitalists, on the other hand, are compact and well organised, and so easily retain control of political power, which they wield for their own purposes. At present the peasants are cajoled with the tale of "Germany must pay," while the small business man is deceived by the yarn that the expensive Ruhr occupation is only for the purpose of proving whether or not Germany can pay. As taxes are relatively light, trade fairly good, and those who would otherwise be unemployed are called up into the army—a point Mr. Garvin carefully ignores—the big Industrialists can carry on their schemes without much protest.

The furtherance of these schemes includes the allowing of Monarchists to gather stores of small arms for their "loyal" bands, and to assist, nay even organise, gangs of criminals and slum rabble, to proclaim a "Rhineland Republic" in the name of "self-determination." To balance this, however, workers striking for a living wage are ruthlessly shot down. As the rest of the "Loving Allies" cannot agree upon a common policy, France pursues her course unchecked.

In England one section of the master class, who fear the competition of a restored Germany, are supporting the French policy, while another section, who hope to find markets for their goods in Germany, call for intervention to prevent the total break-up of that country. Germany is on the brink of chaos, and, to prevent that, rapid action is necessary. But *what* action should be taken?

Twelve months ago the Conservative Party was returned to power to deal with three main problems: Russia; The Situation in Europe; Unemployment. They proposed to deal with these questions by the method of "Tranquillity." The present Dissolution is an admission of their complete failure either to solve these problems or find tranquillity. Apart from the attempt to revive "Protection" as an issue, the situation has some peculiar points.

We do not rate Mr. Baldwin's intelligence above the mediocre, but we would not dare to place it so low as to imagine for a moment that he believes that his half-baked, ambiguous, Protection proposals could



have the slightest real effect upon so serious a situation. He must have known that these proposals would split the Conservative Party, while the throwing over of Austen Chamberlain and Lord Birkenhead cannot be explained away by gossip of Under-Secretaries.

Consider the position of the two men. Both are front rank platform propagandists, but there the similarity ends. Birkenhead is a very useful and entirely unscrupulous political tool, but that is all. Chamberlain, on the other hand, is a big industrial magnate, possesses considerable influence, and carries a name still of considerable power with certain people. He is almost the last man the Conservative Party would throw over for an Under-Secretary—or a dozen of them. Further evidence of the peculiar situation is given in the leading article in the "Daily Telegraph" (16/11/1923), where, in careful language, the impression is conveyed that not only will the Conservatives be likely to sustain defeat at the polls, but that is probably the best thing that could happen in the circumstances.

These factors seem to point to the conclusion that Mr. Baldwin and his colleagues wish to evade the responsibility of attempting to deal with the menacing situation in Europe and so, under the smoke screen of "Protection," they hope to escape from office and leave someone else to try and wade through the morass. But who is to take their place?

The Liberal Party, despite all the stale promises about peace in their programme, carefully avoids saying *how* that peace is to be reached. When that programme is read through it will be found that, apart from a few vague generalities, the Liberal Party proposes to leave things in all essentials just as they are now. That Party is no more anxious than the Conservatives to come to grips with the realities of the situation.

The Labour Party's programme contains a most imposing array—of Promises. Their chief plank is the section for dealing with the unemployment, where a large number of expensive schemes are put forward for the purpose of finding work for the workless. Expensive schemes, however, cost money, while the Labour Party are pledged to "Relief for the Taxpayer." To fulfil this latter pledge they propose to reduce the Income Tax, Food Duties,

Entertainments Tax, and the Corporation Profits Tax. How then can they pay for schemes of work? Quite simply. They propose to institute a "War Debt Redemption Levy"—which sounds so much nicer than "Capital Levy"—and from the saving effected, accompanied by the necessary increase in Taxation of Land Values, all the money required will be found. In other words, the Labour Party proposes to reduce Taxation by raising the Taxes!

For the working class the problem takes on a different aspect. Even if the "victorious" capitalists compose their particular differences over the plunder from the Great War the cause of unemployment, and national wars, would still remain.

While wealth is produced for private profit only that number of workers will be employed that is required to produce for the effective demands of the market, plus those attending to the personal wants and pleasures of the capitalist class. With improved means of production—and war accelerates the improvement of these means—fewer workers are required to turn out a given amount of wealth. As these improvements are brought into being far faster than either the growth of population or the waste of the master class can keep pace with them, it is evident that, apart from temporary fluctuations, unemployment is bound to increase. Even the temporary fluctuations tend to decrease as capitalist control becomes more highly organised in International Trusts or Rings.

None of the political parties at present represented in Parliament desire the abolition of the private ownership of the means of life. Conservatives, Liberals and Labourites openly repudiate any such intention, while the Communist Party by its support of, and endeavours to crawl into, the Labour Party, shows its readiness to support capitalism in practice, contradictory though this may be to Communist theoretical claims.

Only by abolishing the *cause* of unemployment, wars and misery can the workers achieve health and happiness. The workers must give their attention to the abolition of this cause—the private ownership of the means of Life.

The master class rule to-day because the workers have voted them into Parliament—the great law-making and force-raising portion of the political machinery. With

this power in their hands the masters can dictate terms of living to the workers, because with the forces mentioned above at their disposal they can not only keep the workers away from the means of production but also from any wealth already produced. The workers' LIVES are thus under the control of the capitalist class. In other words, the workers are SLAVES.

And slaves they will remain until they acquire—first the knowledge that they are slaves; then the will to attain freedom; and build up the organisation necessary to capture political power.

The only organisation capable of reaching that object is a Socialist organisation. Until that organisation is sufficiently strong to put forward its delegates as candidates, it must continue its educational work of making Socialists.

There is a Socialist organisation in this country—THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN—the only organisation that works for the emancipation of the workers. As a sufficient number of the working class is not yet desirous of establishing Socialism to permit of any candidates being put forward at this Election, we call upon all those who wish for Socialism to express their wish by going to the ballot-box and voting for SOCIALISM by writing it across the ballot paper. Among other things this will help to advertise the number who wish to see Socialism established. Any use of the vote to support any of the candidates in the present Election would merely be a vote for capitalism.

STUDY SOCIALISM. BECOME SOCIALISTS.  
THEN ACHIEVE YOUR EMANCIPATION.

Executive Committee,  
S.P.G.B., Nov., 1923.

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## MANIFESTO

OF

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## LABOUR GOVERNMENTS. THE AUSTRALIAN FIASCO.

One of the greatest pieces of sustained and successful bluff imposed on the modern working class is the bluff about that colossal fraud, Labour Government in Australia. In the early days of the war we read pamphlets sold by the I.L.P. describing the New Jerusalem under such lying titles as "Socialism at Work in Queensland." Unfortunately, the credulous—who are legion—believed this fiction; not only those who in a vague way desired Socialism, but also those who opposed it. The harm done to the cause of Socialism was enormous. It provided, first of all, yet another bogey to be used by the anti-Socialists in their frantic anxiety to attack anything on earth except Socialism. It also closed to Socialist propaganda the ears of all those who were persuaded that here at last was to be found a satisfactory and working substitute for Socialism. Their ultimate, but inevitable, disillusionment will make our task harder than ever.

Before we can preach Socialism we have to destroy belief in such spurious imitations. Let me therefore emphasise the fact that in no part of Australia has the capitalist system been destroyed or even checked; nor has any attempt been made to destroy it by any Labour Government at any time. Capitalism was, and is, the economic system; the capitalists were, and are, the dominant class; and the workers were, and are, exploited. The only noteworthy change during Labour's term of office has been a heightening of the degree of exploitation.

Before the Labour Party came into existence in Australia the capitalist system was in full working order. That is to say the land, the factories, mines, steamships, railways, and all the means of production and distribution were privately owned, and the class who owned them was able to live on the revenue which came to that class as rent, interest, or profits. The work was done and profits produced by a propertyless class compelled to sell its mental and physical energies for wages or salaries. The workers were politically free to come and go as they pleased, but because the land in which they lived belonged not to society but to a section only, they might work only by permission, and on the one



condition of allowing the capitalist class to live without the obligation of useful service merely by virtue of having and holding.

Capitalism was working very well, which means that the constant overcrowding of the labour market was putting into the hands of the employers a weapon, which they naturally used, to beat down the workers' standard of living. As invariably happens, the workers in their discontent organised into Trade Unions in order that in the daily struggle over the amount of their wages they might lessen somewhat the disadvantage under which they suffered through having no accumulated property.

In 1890 and the following years these industrial organisations were put to the test, and failed to do what had been hoped of them. In great and bitter strikes Maritime workers, Miners, and Sheep-shearers were in turn heavily defeated. The cause of the defeats appeared to be the support given to the employers by the Governments of the various States. Police, armed strike-breakers, legal intimidation, in fact all the usual methods were freely employed to crush the revolt. It was at once seen that only by first capturing the State machine could the workers hope to achieve anything material, and Labour Parties were at once formed for this purpose.

Having the backing of the organised workers, and attaching to themselves the support of different groups of discontented small capitalists and farmers, the Labour Party met with rapid success in the years preceding the war, and by 1914 there were Labour Governments in five out of six States, and also a Labour Federal Government.

Now it had been supposed by the Trade Unionists who formed the Labour parties that political control was to be used to further their interests. They, or many of them, made an initial mistake in thinking that State enterprise was Socialism, and that its extension (while leaving capitalism intact) could better their position. They made a second mistake in supposing that their leaders had any intention whatever of defying the capitalists, or that they could have done so if they had wished.

State railways already existed before 1914, and their existence in no way constituted a denial of private property rights. All such State concerns are based, like

company-owned ones, on the exploitation of the workers. Profit is made and is either paid away as interest on loans and bonds, or else it goes into State revenue as taxation relief. The capitalist class draw all the benefit either way. If every branch of industry and commerce, wholesale and retail, was turned over to this form of State capitalism, the worker's lot would be worse not better, and his struggle to live intensified not eased. The real problem of abolishing the wages system, giving the wealth producers direct access to the means of production, and eliminating profit-making, would still have to be faced. The capitalist class would still have to be fought and defeated.

But the Australian workers trusted their leaders, and these leaders did not attempt to face up to this problem. Instead they did what we have always said they would have to do in such circumstances:—

"The Labour Party in Queensland found itself called on to administer a capitalistic state of society, and without any direct mandate or authority to overturn the existing order or to undertake a drastic reconstruction."—(Labour Premier Theodore, *The Labour Magazine*, Sept. 1923.)

And what Theodore says of Queensland applies equally to other Australian Labour Governments.

So these Labour men "administered capitalism"; they used the armed forces to protect capitalist private property against the misguided workers who had put them in office; they put penalties on strikes; they provided blacklegs to smash them; they armed police to protect their blacklegs and browbeat strikers; they jailed men for their organising activities, and when all these methods failed they sent troops to crush them as if they had been at open war. They organised to carry on the capitalist war in Europe, and to further the foreign interests of the Australian capitalist class; they introduced repressive legislation at home to prevent the propagation of anti-war and Socialist views, and four Governments out of five supported conscription. In short, they "administered capitalism."

For this they won, but did not keep, the good opinion of the ruling class. Our Labour Leaders (some of whom, like Henderson, have nothing to learn about the use of armed force against workers who dare to struggle for better conditions) are now asking you to vote for them, and are

instancing the alleged beneficial results of Labour Government in Australia. If you are alive to your own interests you will have none of it.

Let me quote for your guidance some statements of what Labour Government really meant:—

"The last days of the Dooley Government in New South Wales were marked by free use of the police to crush unemployed demonstrators, and by a campaign led by the Treasurer to reduce the minimum wage of State employees."—(Quoted by the *Labour Monthly*, Oct., 1923, from "How Labour Governs," by V. G. Childe, who was private secretary to John Storey, Labour Premier of New South Wales.)

"Labour Governments have not only neglected to carry their platform into effect, in several cases they have initiated movements directly hostile to the workers. . . . In 1913 Labour Premier McGowen called for 'volunteers' to man the retorts during a gas strike. It was a Labour Federal Government which passed the merciless War Precautions Act which was used only against militant workers."—("How Labour Governs.")

The *International Communist* (Sydney) (March 11th, 1922) sums the matter up as follows:—

"Why are the police armed with army service rifles under Labour Governments despite protests from the organised workers? To protect the workers? When the Townsville workers were fired upon by the Labour Government's police, Ryan rushed 100 special armed police to reinforce the local police, and said 'Law and Order must be maintained,' and the train men who refused to take the police were sacked. When the Brisbane workers in March, 1919, decided to celebrate the Russian Revolution, Theodore and his Cabinet gave orders to the police to stop the Red Flag being carried, although the Sinn Féin flag had been carried without any trouble. The Labour Government imprisoned 14 men for taking part in the Red Flag procession, and a number of others were deported."

The *Socialist* (Melbourne) was a consistent supporter of the Labour Party, and was owned by an affiliated body. In its issue of November 4th, 1921, it reported, under the heading "Queensland Government joins the conspiracy to reduce wages," the attempt of that Labour Government to force an all-round attack on wages. The attempt led immediately to a 20 per cent. reduction for 17,000 miners, and the expectations of the Government's capitalist masters were soon fulfilled by a general reduction.

In a strike of waterside workers at Mourilyan Harbour and Innisfail, Queensland Labour Party officials lent their aid to the employers:—

"The shipowners not being able to succeed by

themselves had called upon various craft union officials and Labour Politicians to assist them in their attempt to utterly crush this militant section."—(*Communist*, Sydney, March 2nd, 1923.)

These are a few illustrations of the methods Labour Governments will use when capitalist interests are in danger. As for their so-called Socialism, it is, as we have said, just the same profit-making system as existed before the advent of these Labour Governments. The workers are paid on a cost-of-living basis, and the surplus goes as interest, or as tax relief, into the pockets of the class who own the country:—

The Federal Government "entered the clothing trade and sold clothing . . . 20 per cent. cheaper than capitalist clothiers. Even then they made profits, after allowing for payment of interest and sinking fund."—"Labour in Power," by Leach Williams.)

The lower price of clothing was no benefit at all to the workers, because the State Arbitration Boards based their awards on cost-of-living figures into which the cost of clothes had already entered.

In the enterprises of the Queensland Government the "actual profits earned were £140,686 on the State Butcheries, £6,830 on the State Hotels, £52,361 on railway refreshment rooms—a total of £199,877. There was a loss on the State Fishery and Cannery, but when this is deducted there remains a net profit on these State concerns of £131,262."—(*Labour Magazine*, Sept., 1923.)

And this is the system which has moved Tom Johnson, Editor of *Forward*, and other Scotch left-wing I.L.P.'ers to delirious enthusiasm. In defending it they are, of course, doing the greatest possible disservice to Socialism. Johnson believes that workers under Labour Governments are better off than others, but he cannot prove (although he seems to believe) that there is or has been Socialism in Queensland or under any other Labour Government.

Labour Premier Theodore states specifically that "capitalism has not been abolished."—(*Labour Magazine*, Sept. 1923).

Also not only has Johnson to prove that the workers there are better off than, say, those in Victoria; he has also to show that any difference that may temporarily exist (it could not be permanent) is due to the existence of a Labour Government. He has not done so yet.

Sir John Simon made a statement that in Queensland there was in 1921 more unemployment than in any other State. Johnson's "triumphant" reply (*Daily Herald*, July 28th, 1923) consists of evidence to show that in fact Tasmania had



a percentage of unemployment among Trade Unionists of 16.7, N.S. Wales 11.9, and Queensland 11.3, as against as low a figure as 5.9 for Victoria, the only State which never had a Labour Government.

What a glorious argument for Johnson's brand of "Socialism"! And, moreover, he carefully omitted to point out that four other States whose figures he quoted had also enjoyed Labour Governments, which therefore shared responsibility for the unemployment that existed.

His final shattering argument was that "the experience of the people of Queensland (after testing a Labour-Socialist Government for eight years) has been such that they voted last May for a further three years of it." But he did not say that its majority, although higher than in 1920, was lower than it had been in either 1915 or 1918! And it is surely an indication of the workers' dissatisfaction with Labour rule that after some years of it they threw the Labour Party out of four States, as well as out of the Federal Government.

Mr. E. J. Holloway, President of the E.C. of the Australian Labour Party, admitted in Conference 1921, that:—

"The members of the Federal Executive know that the men are not satisfied with the programme and objective of the Australian Labour Movement."—*Communist*, Sydney, Dec. 1st, 1922.)

Would they be dissatisfied if the Labour Party had been as successful as Johnson pretends? Below is more evidence of discontent.

"Although a young country, Australia presented a picture of economic unloveliness that was staggering to the moral conception. The mass of the workers could not under present conditions look for a reasonable standard of living, or hope to be assured of employment."—The Chairman, Conference of Victorian Section of A.L.P., Melbourne Age, 19th Sept., 1921.)

The following is a resolution passed by the N.S. Wales Trade Union Congress in condemnation of a Labour Government:—

"That while recognising the futility of solving unemployment under capitalism, this conference registers its protest against the State Government's action in deliberately allowing workers in this country to starve, and calls upon the Labour Government to grant full sustenance to all the unemployed."—(*Brisbane Daily Mail*, 6th Oct., 1921.)

Why, the very evidence given by the defenders of this damnable system of State slavery is enough to condemn it, and one cannot but be amazed at the mentality of those who so cheerfully smash their own

case. Is it the audacity of ignorance, or merely contempt for the understanding of the workers? A *Herald* correspondent (26/7/1923) actually backs up his case for Queensland by showing that:—

"Far from Labour rule driving capital out of the country fresh capital has been introduced to the extent of over 55 millions."

What a case for a Labour Government! Does capital flow into Queensland because there is a more equal distribution of wealth? Do capitalists habitually offer themselves up for willing sacrifice?

No, capital flows into Queensland because exploitation is keener, and the rate of profit higher. With the assistance of the Labour Government wages have been forced down, and Federal arbitration courts have ruled that the pre-war standard of living can no longer be the basis.

Writing of these arbitration acts, the *Socialist* (Melbourne) (4/11/1921) has this:

"Such acts have greatly increased the efficiency of the capitalist system in Queensland. . . . The cost of production . . . in almost every industry in Australia was never less than it is at the present time, and the amount of surplus wealth over the cost of production which is being appropriated by the capitalist class was never greater."

Will Tom Johnson defend this, too?

While he is lying about "Socialism" in Queensland, Theodore admits that his party never proposed to work for Socialism at all. He replied to a Mr. Scullin, who wanted to amend the Party programme, and who had said that "Nationalisation was but State capitalism," that he (Mr. Scullin) was using the "term socialisation with a meaning quite different to anything which the Labour Party always stood for." (*Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 12/10/1921.)

When the Labour Leaders talk about Socialism they do so with their tongues in their cheeks.

It is for these reasons among others that we urge you not to support the Labour Party. We contend that Socialism is the only object worthy of working-class support. The return of a Labour Government will not further that object.

If you ask what is to happen to the workers in the meantime, our reply is simple. You are poor and your position is hopeless because you are wage-slaves. So long as you remain wage-slaves you will have to suffer from the evils that go with wage-slavery, and it does not matter whether that be under a Conservative, a Liberal or a Labour Government. If you

think that it is better to be a wage-slave under a Labour Government, I ask you to consider Australia. We however urge you to recognise that it is the capitalist system which is at fault, and it does not matter to you what is the label of the political party which administers that system. Until you have overthrown capitalism you are going to continue to suffer as you suffer now. You will not find a solution in binding yourselves hand and foot to the State machine of a Labour Government.

As for the notion that your efforts can be well spent asking for instalments of Socialism, that is based on utter illusion. This country is rotten with social reforms, and they are being added to every year; and yet not only have these brought no progress towards Socialism, but the real foundation of capitalism is stronger than ever it was. The real basis is the private ownership of the means of life, and both here and in Queensland the rich are richer, and poor are poorer than ever before. After a century of "instalments" of Socialism there is more unemployment, more insecurity, and more hopeless subjection than ever; and there are signs on every hand that your position will get worse not better.

The sooner you turn aside from the long-exploded quack remedies offered to you and set yourselves to the task of propagating Socialism and organising the workers for its accomplishment, the sooner your problems will be solved, and the less will be the cost to you in poverty and suffering.

H.

### BY THE WAY.

When we have pointed out that profit-sharing and bonus schemes introduced by so-called good employers were merely means to increase profit, effect economies, and attempts to subdue the growing unrest of the workers, we have been accused of being impossibilists, carping critics, or agitators actuated by malice. From time to time we have dealt with the boasted benevolence of the Levers', the Cadburys, and the various co-partners, and now we have further confirmation of the correctness of our case from the profit-sharing proposals of Lloyds Bank, Ltd. Discussing these proposals, Mr. J. W. Beaumont Pease, the Chairman of Lloyds, said (*Daily Chronicle*), October 22, 1923):—

"The directors firmly believed the scheme

would improve relations between employer and employed and would be all for the good of the shareholders, the directors and the staff."

To improve relations means, of course, to anticipate the stifling of future discontent, and the recent organisation of bank clerks may have helped the directors toward their latest decision. Further we read:—

"The scheme was not likely to diminish the amount of profit available for the shareholders' dividend, and it was quite possible it would not cost the bank anything. There was, Mr. Pease added, no question of the loyalty of the staff, but the scheme would increase the zeal with which they worked for the bank, and it would materially increase the profit. It would also lead to economies by the staff keen on increasing the profit. With the large number employed, these economies in the aggregate would mean much."

Here the plain, brutal truth is revealed. For the staff, harder work and a probable reduction in their number, while for the directors and shareholders the prospect of an "increase of profit" guaranteed through the continued docility of their employees, and, cheapest of cheap philanthropy, "to cost nothing."

At a time when the Capitalists are incessantly crying out for "more trade," "greater efficiency," "reduced costs," etc., with, of course, the illusionary bait of "more work" to appease the swelling numbers of the workless, it is significant to note the effect of these master class desires when put into operation:—

"There has been a saving of £55,000,000 in the wages bill of the railway companies since 1921. . . . Mr. Thomas remarked that, as there was a greater volume of traffic dealt with on the railways with a personnel of 50,000 less, that would obviously indicate more efficiency."—(*Daily Chronicle*, 17/11/23.)

Nor is that by any means the final word in economy, for the amalgamated companies propose further improvements by way of automatic signalling, electrical luggage trolleys and conveyors, the elimination of the army of railway ticket punchers, examiners and other officials by improved methods for the issue and cancellation of tickets, etc. Commenting upon these innovations, the same report says:—

"These will be gradually carried out. The introduction of new labour saving and safety devices will mean big reductions in the railway staffs."—(*Daily Chronicle*, 24/10/23.)

Could the brutal nature of Capitalism be more plainly revealed than in these few facts.



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## The Socialist Standard,

DECEMBER



1923

## THE

## "MOUNTAIN AND THE MOUSE."

We have often been told that what we need in Parliament are "good business men" with "practical knowledge and sound instincts." So when the Conservative Party obtained a majority of seats at the last General Election they took the opportunity of Mr. Bonar Law's ill-health to put one of the foremost "business men" of the country at the head of affairs. By all the accounts in the Conservative and Liberal press, Mr. Baldwin not only possessed wonderful business qualities and acumen, but was fond of home hobbies, such as rearing pigs. Surely a paragon beyond compare.

Less than twelve months has been sufficient to expose the absurdity of these claims. The Liberal press for some time past has been denouncing Mr. Baldwin's weakness in "giving way" to M. Poincaré over the Ruhr question and the support by the French of the "Separatist" gangs in the Rhineland. Now the "great genius," baffled by the complexity of the problems and interests assailing him on all sides, can think of no better solution than throwing up the sponge and dissolving Parliament.

The reason given out in public is that the Prime Minister wishes to be absolved from Mr. Bonar Law's pledge to tranquillity, particularly in relation to the Fiscal system,

so that he can tackle the problem of unemployment, which

"threatens to impair permanently the trained skill and the independent spirit of our workers, to disorganise the whole fabric of industry and credit and, by eating away the sources of revenue, to undermine the very foundations of our national and municipal life."—(Mr. Baldwin's address to his constituents. *Observer*, 18/11/1923.)

An appalling prospect truly! And what has brought about this terrible predicament? We are told:—

"In large measure this state of affairs is due to the political and economic disorganisation of Europe consequent on the Great War."

While further on it is stated:—

"The disorganisation and poverty of Europe, accompanied by broken exchanges and by higher tariffs all the world over, have directly and indirectly narrowed the whole field of our foreign trade." (*Ibid*).

Here then is a situation so desperate that only giant remedies can be adequate. As Mr. Baldwin says, it is no time for palliatives. Let us turn then to his, and the Government's, proposals on this tremendous problem, and see how "great business men" with their marvellously endowed brains so worshipped by the late W. H. Mallock, offer to solve the problem.

Were the position less serious, the proposals would arouse ribald laughter at their grotesque and childish character. A school child would be jeered at if it put forward such an idiotic "remedy."

The main proposal is "to impose duties on manufactured goods" with the following objects:—

(i.) To raise revenue by methods less unfair to our own home production, which at present bears the whole burden of local and national taxation, including the cost of relieving unemployment.

(ii.) To give special assistance to industries which are suffering under unfair foreign competition.

(iii.) To utilise these duties in order to negotiate for a reduction of foreign tariffs in those directions which would most benefit our export trade.

(iv.) To give substantial preference to the Empire on the whole range of our duties with a view to promoting the continued extension of the principle of mutual preference which has already done so much for the expansion of our trade, and the "development, in co-operation with the other Governments of the Empire, of the boundless resources of our common heritage."

Did ever such a mountain bring forth such a mouse? If the cause of the desperate situation is "the political and economic disorganisation of Europe," how can a tax on manufactured goods entering one country, touch, let alone cure, that dis-

organisation? And what are "manufactured" goods?

Steel sections are manufactured goods of the steelworks, but are raw material for the shipbuilder, builder and engineer. Mr. Baldwin does not even tell us *what* manufactured goods are to be taxed. And the first object of the tax contains an insoluble contradiction.

If revenue is to be raised by the tax, then the goods must come into the country for this revenue to be realised. But if this occurs, then the unemployed in those branches will still remain unemployed. On the other hand, if the tax is high enough to keep out the goods, then there is no revenue from that source. There is no escape from this dilemma. Either the unemployed are not relieved from their workless situation, or there is no revenue from that tax.

What is "unfair" competition? Every manufacturer in this country will argue that all foreign competition is "unfair." Those suffering from German competition will denounce the "low" wages of Germany as "unfair," while others, beaten by the Americans, will vigorously denounce American "high" wages as "unfair." So to meet their wishes "special assistance" will have to be given to all of them? This at least has the merit of simplicity.

On the other hand, "the greatest and most important of our national industries" is not to be protected by a tax!

Wonderful logic! For, says the Government:—

"It is not our intention, in any circumstances, to impose any duties on wheat, flour, oats, meat (including bacon and ham), cheese, butter or eggs." (*Ibid*).

However, to escape the awkward dilemma this declaration produces, the farmer of arable land is to receive a bounty of £1 per acre per annum, on the condition that he pays his "able-bodied" labourers—whatever they may be—at least 30s. a week. This £1 per acre is to come from the tax that won't be raised by keeping out "manufactured" goods.

That section of the capitalists which desires a Tariff hopes, by keeping details secret till after the Election, to be returned to power, so that behind the Tariff—if it is effective—they may raise prices in the home market. The workers, who are constantly told that high prices are due to high wages, will then find that their low wages will form no

effective barrier against prices going up, which may cause them to wonder which is which.

Mr. Churchill, in a speech at Manchester (18/11/1923) gave eight points of the Liberal programme as follows:—

"Free Trade, the immediate reform of our electoral system on the lines of proportional representation, the strengthening and improvement of National Insurance, housing, land reform, agricultural reform and organisation, the development of the Empire, and, last but not least, peace abroad."

He omitted the point of abuse which has filled so large a portion of the Liberal leaders' speeches up to the present, or it may be that he considered his own efforts in this direction rendered any further emphasis unnecessary.

On the marvels wrought, and to be wrought, by Free Trade, one may quote from a famous epitaph and say "Look around." If the present condition of things is the result of over 70 years of Free Trade it could hardly be surprising to find numbers of the workers turning to the equally fallacious nostrum of "Protection" in the hope that it may bring a better result.

And what a splendid remedy for unemployment is proportional representation. Think of the awful strain the brilliant brains of the Gallipoli gambler (in other men's lives) must have undergone to have made this wonderful discovery! Will not a strengthening of National Insurance provide the European markets with that purchasing power they so sadly lack to-day? Housing, land reform, agricultural reform—are not these promises at least as old—and as futile—as Free Trade? But then red herrings have to be very stale before they lose their scent. No doubt if returned to power the Liberals will develop the Empire—or promise to do so—before the winter is out. How *that* will settle unemployment we are not told. Peace abroad is certainly desirable, though how the Liberals will deal with their friends the French and the latter's Monarchist intrigues in Central Europe, we are left to guess.

The Labour Party denounces the Government for their inadequate programme of winter work for the unemployed, and puts forward an elaborate list of proposals ranging from Electric Power Supply to Afforestation and Housing. But these things will cost money while the Labour Party promises relief for the Taxpayer. Is



this a dilemma? Not at all. To pay for these schemes and relieve the taxpayer the Labour Party proposes to raise fresh taxes. Simplicity itself.

This Party had nearly succeeded in burying "The Capital Levy" when the Election was suddenly announced. The Capital Levy was hastily dug up again, but looked so shabby and mouldy that it was decided to dress it up in a new coat called "The Non-recurring graduated War Redemption Levy."

If this title fails to sink it, the Levy will be laid on all individual fortunes in excess of £5,000. In its original form the amount of the fortune was lower than the sum above. But it was found that many of the Labour leaders' war fortunes come within that zone, and so the amount had to be raised.

The superficial issues of this Election—Free Trade versus Ambiguous Protection—are of no interest to the working class. Whichever side wins they will still remain slave to the master class, because the private ownership of the means of life—the cause of the workers' enslavement—will still continue. When the workers understand their slave position they will organise to contest an Election for the purpose of taking control of political power with the object of attaining their emancipation and establishing Socialism.

### MACDONALD'S HYPOCRISY.

I find I have been brought into dubious notoriety through the columns of THE SOCIALIST STANDARD. We read, under the sub-title of "Simplicity": "A Mr. Easton took up the point, and was apparently so staggered at the suggested duplicity of his 'honourable leader,' wrote Macdonald."

Well, I am just "a Mr. Easton," an ordinary comrade in the ranks of the ONE Socialist Party, which kept its international faith during the Great War when others beat the big drum and made munitions in their "simplicity."

I was not "staggered" at the charge of duplicity levelled against a comrade of mine; for we are past being "staggered" at West Green Corner, Tottenham, by any charges made by the orators of the S.P.G.B.

The SIMPLICITY is seen by quoting Frank Rose, who voted against a Socialist resolution in the House of Commons which

my comrade, Ramsay Macdonald, supported.

Knowing Macdonald's faithful career, and his persistent refusal of honours, wealth, and position, so that he could fight for the workers, I naturally endeavoured to defend him. I have done so to the consternation of a noisy group of S.P.G.-ers at West Green Corner during this summer's I.L.P. Campaign.

I knew his consistent attitude on Education, and I was certain that these charges were unfounded. I asked my comrade to meet the charge "that he backed Sir J. Brunner's Bill to INCREASE child slavery."

He asked me to accept his attitude on education and child labour as proof of his statement, "that whatever Bill he backed was to protect children from the capitalist and give to the children a BETTER CHANCE of education."

Then, to my surprise, those two letters were published without permission in THE SOCIALIST STANDARD, and certain quotations were printed from the Bill of 17 years ago.

When I saw that the names of genuine educationalists like my friend the late Sir George White, Mr. Yoxall, and Mr. Crooks (apart from Macdonald) were behind the Bill, I felt certain that it was not a retrograde step.

When I read the clauses I at once saw that this Bill of 1906 was a noble attempt to kill for ever the damnable curse of half-time.

All thinkers know the baneful effect of half-time working; yet the workers of the North stood out to exploit their own children in the mills. So Macdonald, White, and other educationalists endeavoured to make one step forward in the emancipation of the child life of this country. No one imagines that this was a Socialist measure; but every fresh opportunity given for the mental development of our children is a help towards Social Democracy.

Suffice to state that all the child exploiters were against the Bill.

The little capitalists who found half-time work much cheaper were against the Bill.

The millowners and, alas! the mill-workers were against the Bill.

In the realm of practical politics you cannot legislate far in advance of the people.

Macdonald and myself stand by the fine

ideals of the I.L.P. quoted on page 28 of your last issue:—

"The raising of the age of child labour with a view to its ultimate extinction."

#### THE FACTS.

What, then, we desire to know is: Was this Bill of 1906 a step forward? Did it attempt to clear the road for the children? Was it a move up or down?

Let us see the provisions.

#### SCHOOL AGE.

In 1906 school-leaving age governed by provisions of "Robson's Act" of 1899, which laid down a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 14, with exceptions for agriculture and half-time.

With regard to agricultural children, they were allowed to work half-time after the age of 11, provided:—

(1) They had attained the standard fixed for partial exemption;

(2) That they attended school half-time till 13.

The 1906 Bill, if passed, would have improved the position in the following ways:—

(1) The minimum age for total exemption would have become 13 instead of 12.

(2) That exemption at the age of 13 was conditional of the attendance of children so exempted at continuation schools for three evenings per week until 16.

(3) That as regards agriculture the minimum exemption age was raised from 11 to 12, though after this age continuation school attendance two nights per week was substituted for half-time school attendance.

The improvement would have been more than appears from the mere provisions of the Bill, for according to Mr. A. J. Mundella, the authority on Education Law, the half-time provisions of "Robson's Act" never worked. Therefore, if the 1906 Bill had been passed, the agricultural child would have got full-time education till 12, instead of 11, continuation schools till 16, instead of an illusory half-time education till 13.

Here, then, we see that this was a great attempt. Macdonald struck at the half-time system. For that he is called a "hypocrite." Macdonald's case is completely justified in the splendid endeavour of 17 years ago.

The S.P.G.B. contains some very sincere and enthusiastic comrades, but they have a very bad example set by their leaders, who waste their time in fighting their own com-

rades when they should come into our ranks and face the common enemy.

Men, like myself, of the rank and file, who have sacrificed for Socialism for over twenty years, and preached it in the days when it was dangerous, are called "fakers" by the Plymouth Brethren of the Socialist Movement.

They malign every noble endeavour, and suggest the worst motives for every action. They alone have the Truth. They alone have the key of Salvation.

I have often given my best for the cause of Socialism from the platform of the I.L.P. I have seen the workers coming towards the Light, and I have seen them tripped by the wreckers of the S.P.G.B., and converts have been lost for Socialism.

This sort of thing makes me sad.

"A. MR. EASTON."

(The above letter arrived too late for insertion in November "S.S." Ed. Com.).

#### REPLY.

I will deal with the central points at issue first: the trimmings can be left until afterwards.

The "Factory and Workshops Act" of 1901 laid it down that no child might be employed full time in factories or workshops, either in such factories and workshops, or on work that was given out to be done at home. This Act defined a child as follows:—

"The expression 'child' means a person who is under the age of fourteen years and who has not, being of the age of thirteen years, obtained the certificate of proficiency or attendance at school mentioned in Part III. of the Act."—Sect. 156, p. 99.

When a child became a "young person," then such a person could be employed as a full-timer. A "young person" is defined as follows:—

"When a child of the age of thirteen years has obtained from a person authorised by the Board of Education a certificate of having attained such standard of proficiency in reading, writing and arithmetic, or such standard of previous due attendance at a certified efficient school as is mentioned in this section, that child shall be deemed to be a young person for the purposes of this Act."—Sect. 71, p. 52.

The total exemption age, therefore, was fourteen, and under this age (that is, thirteen or over) children could not be employed as full-timers in factories or workshops, except under special circumstances—that



they had obtained an educational certificate of proficiency.

Under the Bill Macdonald backed, all children were allowed total exemption from school at *thirteen*, providing they were forced to attend evening continuation classes.

By fixing thirteen in place of fourteen as the age at which children in general might be employed in factories and workshops, Macdonald proposed handing them over to the capitalist to be fully exploited at an earlier age than formerly.

The 1899 Act was an amendment to the "Elementary Education (School Attendance) Act" of 1893. This amending Act provided:—

"that the local authority for any district may, by byelaw for any parish within their district, fix thirteen years as the minimum age for exemption from school attendance in the case of children employed in agriculture."

The Bill Macdonald backed fixed twelve as the minimum age for total exemption of children employed in agriculture. Here again, Macdonald proposed handing children over to the capitalist for full-time exploitation at an earlier age than formerly.

Mr. Easton is eloquent on the subject of the half-timers. He states that he has read the clauses of the Brunner Bill, and "at once saw this Bill of 1906 was a noble attempt to kill forever the damnable curse of half-time." Mr. Easton has wonderful sight. *There is not a single statement, in the Bill under Review, that deals with half-timers except by converting them into full-timers!* If the Brunner Bill had been passed, children could still have been employed half-time in agriculture after the age of eleven. *There is nothing whatever in the Bill against such procedure.*

Macdonald did not strike at the evil of the half-time system.

The position remains exactly as we stated it in the October "S.S." The Brunner Bill (backed by Macdonald) would have increased child slavery. For the provisions of the Bill, and a consideration of the effect of driving children to evening classes after a day's work, I refer readers to that issue.

Mr. Easton states that under the 1899 Act agricultural children were allowed to work half-time after the age of 11, and that the Brunner Bill raised the exemption age from 11 to 12.

Here are the facts.

The "Elementary Education (School

Attendance) Act," 1893, made the following regulation:—

"1. The age at which a child may, in pursuance of any byelaw made under the Elementary Education Acts, 1870 to 1891, obtain total or partial exemption from the obligation to attend school on obtaining a certificate as to the standard of examination which he has reached, shall be raised to eleven, and every such byelaw, so far as it provides for such exemption, shall be construed and have effect as if a reference to eleven years of age were substituted therein for a reference to a lower age, and in section seventy-four of the Elementary Education Act, 1870, eleven shall be substituted for ten."

The 1899 Act amended this section, raising the age of partial exemption to twelve:

"1. On and after the first day of January, one thousand nine hundred, the Elementary Education (School Attendance) Act, 1893, shall have effect as if 'twelve' were substituted therein for 'eleven.'"

The ages at which children might be partially and fully employed and the limitations of such employment are covered by the following Acts along with those already mentioned:—

Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, 1904;

Employment of Children Act, 1903.

As to the statement about the provisions of an Act not working: such an argument would have applied with equal force to the provisions of the Brunner Bill. Where capitalists are hindered by the provisions of an Act they usually find means of getting round such provisions.

The anti-working-class actions of Crooks and other backers of the Brunner Bill have been frequently dealt with in these columns. The recruiting activities of members of the I.L.P. (including Macdonald) during the late war have also been frequently dealt with in these columns. On such points there is ample information, for those who desire it, in our Party Manifesto.

The attitude of the I.L.P. "as a party" during the war is described by the "Labour Year Book," 1916, as follows:—

"Throughout, the official organ of the party has been highly critical of the diplomacy preceding the war, and has sought to take up the international Socialist attitude without directly demanding the cessation of hostilities."—p. 347.

Mr. Easton gives us an unsolicited testimonial of himself. I know nothing of him outside the correspondence we have published, and we were assured that he was agreeable to the publication of the letters in question. Whether he has been misled or is crooked, I leave the reader to judge.

GILMAC.

## THE NEW OFFICES.

"No, Jack! I shall not join just yet. Your Party is right, your position sound, and your arguments conclusive. I admit all that, but I don't think the time is ripe. When that times comes, Jack, you may count on me."

"And when do you think the time will be ripe, as you call it?"

"I haven't a ghost of a notion. But I'd like to see the workers wake up a bit, first. I'd like to see your party bigger, more active, you know what I mean,—more prominent."

"So would I, friend. But apparently you have not seen our new headquarters, I can hear."

"New headquarters? I—"

"Listen! It is neither a pretentious, nor a massive building. We are not building it for posterity; we shall not need it long. Immediately to the right of the entrance hall, there is a book saloon wherein any work helpful to the furtherance of Socialism may be procured or consulted. Most of the leading periodicals are represented on the reading stands. To the left are the editorial offices, where the three official journals and numbers of pamphlets are produced."

"Three official journals? I—"

"Wait a minute. There is THE SOCIALIST STANDARD, now enlarged to forty pages, still appearing monthly and having all the characteristics of a first-class political review. There is the Socialist Tribune, a weekly summary of a more topical character. It focuses the reader's attention upon events whilst they are still current, and picks out the thread of history whilst it is being made. The Socialist News appears daily, and, I say it without boasting, is unique in the world's journalism. Not an advertisement appears in it. It is thus entirely free from subsidised matter, and is independent of any attempt at a capitalist boycott. It is smaller in size than the usual capitalist rag, but it is all meat. Its editorial and contributory staffs are well grounded in Marxian economics and their historical application. Its daily articles are the despair of the few remaining capitalist sheets, for the latter's long reliance upon reiterated lies and mass suggestion has broken down in face of hard economic facts. You cannot convince a man who is going down for the third time that he is not drowning by bawling through a megaphone fifteen

times that all is for the best. And the workers were no longer convinced that capitalism was the only possible system, when they remembered the hard times before the war, the little glimpse of better times during the war's progress, and the return to bad times again afterwards. But I am digressing. There is a dispatch department at the back, and that about completes the ground floor. Upstairs there are writing rooms, studies, class rooms and committee rooms. There is a good-sized hall for lectures and public meetings, and there is even an information bureau, where anyone with a difficulty may seek Socialist "counsel's opinion." The most interesting perhaps are the Organiser's rooms, where information, facts and figures are compiled for the use of our staff of speakers and propagandists. There are other details you would find interesting, and even stimulating, but I think I have said enough to set you wondering."

"You have, Jack! I have been wondering where these premises are situated."

"There now! If you, a convinced Socialist, were only in the movement, you would know as much as I about it."

"Yes! But tell me, Jack, where are these new headquarters?"

"Well! At the moment, they are in my mind's eye. All we are waiting for is for you, and many others like you, to leave off waiting for the time to be ripe, and to come and help ripen it. We shall get our new offices and our new journals, when we get the funds. We shall get the funds when we get the members. We shall get the members when you leave off waiting, as I said just now, and start working. Then will follow, not merely new offices and journals, but, greater than all else, a new social system—Socialism. Join up!

W. T. H.

## PORTSMOUTH.

Persons interested in the formation of a Branch of the Party in the above neighbourhood should communicate with—

H. JOHNSON,

61, Riga Terrace,

Landport,

Portsmouth.



### THE POLICY OF THE I.L.P.\*

The *New Leader*, October 5th, published a statement outlining the policy of a "Socialist Government" on the question of unemployment. This statement was drawn up by the National Council of the Independent Labour Party, and is the first of a series on "outstanding political questions of the day," to be issued weekly.

The introductory paragraph by the *New Leader* says "the I.L.P. is the militant socialist wing of the Labour Party." In bold type is printed the headlines:

"How to deal with unemployment. What a Socialist Government would do."

There is no mistaking this definite claim by the I.L.P., not only to the title of Socialist but also to this particular policy as being Socialist.

The statement opens with an absurd contradiction:—

"Before the war even in time of trade prosperity, there were always at least 200,000 persons out of regular employment."

"The primary cause of unemployment is the capitalist system of society. The operations of capitalism result in (a) violent productive fluctuations; (b) violent financial fluctuations; (c) constant international disturbances. These in turn create unemployment."

How these create unemployment when it already exists in the most prosperous times, i.e., when the fluctuations and disturbances are absent, is for the council to explain.

The point to be noted, however, is not so much the contradiction as the pretended analysis contained in the paragraph quoted; (a), (b), and (c) are reputed to be the three causes of unemployment, and the statement of the National Council is divided into three sections as follows: "(a) methods of preventing violent productive fluctuations; (b) methods of preventing violent financial fluctuations, and (c) methods of preventing international disturbances." It is quite unnecessary to go further than this supposed analysis, together with the methods denoted in the sub-headings to show conclusively that the statement is not drawn up from the working-class standpoint, nor does it explain unemployment in the light of socialist knowledge. Fluctuations in production when they occur are the result of fluctuations in demand, and are the bugbear of capitalist politicians, economists and captains of industry. The boom in trade

catches them unprepared, and the slump finds them with unsaleable goods on their hands. It is their concern to find the mean level and abolish fluctuations. But the finding of such a mean level does not alter the amount of unemployment; all that it does is to diminish the numbers during the slump and increase the numbers during the boom. The result is best seen by taking a production chart over a number of years, and cutting off the peaks to fill in the depressions; when it will be seen that a straight line will result somewhere between the highest and lowest points.

It would be a mistake, however, to imagine that this line bore any definite relation to the amount of unemployment, or even to the quantity of wealth produced. For while the amount of production might show an enormous rise over a period of, say ten years, the number of workers employed in its production might have decreased considerably in consequence of new machinery, new methods, and speeding-up generally.

It matters but little to the workers whether the growth of unemployment proceeds spasmodically through fluctuations or whether it proceeds evenly without them. The fact for them to notice is that unemployment does increase with capitalist development, and that the National Council produce no evidence, nor show any reasoning to prove that the elimination of crises, industrial or financial, would benefit the workers. On the other hand it is almost safe to assume that such elimination would in reality diminish the number of workers required to produce a given quantity of wealth. Chaos and uncertainty invariably cause wastefulness in the expenditure of labour power.

During the 19th century, when crises occurred periodically, capital was often expended in anticipation of booms that never matured, and mistaken ventures by capitalists frequently resulted in gluts that compensated the workers to some extent by falling prices.

If the capitalists knew always the extent of the market, production would be arranged to that level. Mass production would be introduced more extensively. Competition would be eliminated by the closed formation of rings and combines, and the workers, as a result of these very reforms,

advocated by the National Council, would be in a worse plight than now.

Nor must it be forgotten that without help from the I.L.P. capitalism is already developing rapidly along these lines. Prices, over extensive markets, are fixed, and maintained by agreements between the capitalists concerned. In many cases the demand is known, and shared, by arrangement between the associated concerns.

For the workers to organise politically with the object of smoothing away difficulties in the path of the class that exploits them is folly. Such action could only follow from lack of knowledge of their actual relationship towards the master class. Given the facts of Socialism, every worker of ordinary intelligence can reason for himself how he stands in relation to every question that engages public attention.

The paramount fact of every worker's existence is his poverty and insecurity, and those who trade on his poverty or play on his fears without helping him to understand the antagonism of interests between the working-class and the master-class, together with the reasons for that antagonism, are guilty of trickery and fraud.

On this question of unemployment the National Council have utterly failed to explain either the cause or the cure. Their contribution to the general discussion might have been published in any capitalist newspaper without fear of enlightening a single worker to the fact of his slavery. It barely scratches the surface. It analyses the subject from a purely capitalist viewpoint, and proposes reforms to patch up the existing system, with no proof that such reforms would benefit the working-class in any way whatever. It claims to stand for the workers yet fails to lay down the working-class position on the most prominent question of the day. It calls on the workers to consolidate for the achievement of capitalist ideals; a system of exploitation without trade upheavals or international conflicts; a system where dividends would be assured; where the percentage of unemployed would always be sufficient for capitalist needs, but never so high that it threatened the system.

F.F.

If unable to obtain the "Socialist Standard" through the local news-agent, send direct to:—

17, Mount Pleasant, W.C. 1.

### WHO WERE THE FIRST HUNS?

Ask most people, "Who were the first people in the European War to drop bombs on cities and destroy defenceless women and children?" and they will reply, "The Germans."

We have heard much these many years of the Hunnish raids of the Zepps. and aeroplanes, and the tales have been accompanied by harrowing descriptions of the sufferings of defenceless people.

The following quotation is from "A lantern Lecture, entitled 'War in the Air,' by C. G. Grey (Editor of the *Aeroplane*), issued by the National War Saving's Committee, Salisbury Square, E.C.4":—

"Slide 32: The Navy's land machines went over to Belgium, and it is to the credit of the R.N.A.S. that the first hostile missiles which fell on German soil were bombs dropped by the R.N.A.S. at Cologne and Dusseldorf. Slide 34: Unfortunately the German advance in Belgium drove our bases so far back it became impossible to reach German towns with aeroplanes then available. Slide 35: It is interesting to note that these early raids of the R.N.A.S. were the first examples of bomb-dropping attacks in any war; and the pity is that we had not at the beginning of the war enough aeroplanes."

Another dirty mark on the white banner of ideals!

### DEATH THE SANCTIFIER.

Bonar Law is dead. While he lived he was our enemy. Now that he is dead must we be sorrowful? He helped to send our fathers, and brothers and sons to the European shambles; his life is the history of staunch support of the master's policy of robbing and oppressing the workers. He did his best to delude the workers into the belief that capitalism was the best of all possible systems, and has helped to press down the workers' wages since the armistice was declared. Must we revere him because he has gone the way of all flesh? He was our enemy and those who now speak so nicely of him are also our enemies.

Such a one is Ramsay MacDonald. Here is his tribute:—

"It was with profound regret when I landed at Dover this morning that I learned of the death of Mr. Bonar Law. When a man has done the work he has done, and passes out, it is always difficult adequately to express all one feels. I can say no more."—(*Daily Herald*, 31/10/23.)

Strange that there are still some who believe that Ramsay MacDonald is a sincere representative of working-class interests!

GILMAC.



**SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****BRANCH DIRECTORY.**

**BATTERSEA.**—Communications to A. Jones, 3 Matthew-st., Latchmere Estate, Battersea, S.W. Branch meets Thursday, 8 p.m. at The Waiting Room, Latchmere Baths, entrance in Burns Road.

**BIRMINGHAM.**—Communications to L. Vinetsky, 11 Upper Dean-st., Birmingham. Branch meets A.E.U. Institute, Spiceal-st., every Saturday.

**CENTRAL.**—Membership obtained only through the Ex. Committee. Applications to General Sec.

**DEPTFORD.**—Sec., J. Veasey, 24, Marlton-st., E. Greenwich, S.E. 10. Branch meets 1st and 3rd Wednesdays in month, at 8 o'clock, at 435, New Cross-rd., S.E. Discussion after Branch business. Public invited.

**EAST LONDON.**—Communications to A. Jacobs, Sec., 78 Eric-st., Mile-end, E.3. Branch meets first and third Mondays in month at 141 Bow-rd.

**EDINBURGH.**—Communications to Andrew Porter, 12a, Kings-rd., Portobello.

**HACKNEY.**—Communications to the Sec., 78 Greenwood-rd., E.8. Branch meets Fridays, 7.30, at The Arcadians, 42, Amhurst-rd., Hackney Stn.

**HANLEY.**—Branch meets Mondays, Working Men's Club, Glass-st. Communications to Sec., T. Travis, 27, Arthur Street, Cobridge, Staffs.

**ISLINGTON.**—Branch meets Wednesdays, 8.30, at 144 Seven Sisters-rd., Holloway, N. Communications to W. Baker, 35 Alma-st., Kentish Town, N.W.

**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.**—Communications to Sec., J. Bird, 5 Wellington-avenue, Westcliffe-on-Sea.

**TOOTING.**—Communications to Sec., 3, Lyveden-rd., Tooting, S.W.17. Branch meets Fridays, at Parochial Hall, Church-lane, Tooting, at 8 p.m.

**TOTTENHAM.**—Secretary, 12, High Cross road, Tottenham, N.17. Branch meets Fridays, The Trades Hall, 7, Bruce-grove, Tottenham. Discussion after branch business. Public invited.

**WALTHAMSTOW.**—Communications to A. J. Godfrey, 30, Waverley road, Walthamstow, E.17. Branch meets at Workmen's Hall, High-st., every Monday.

**WATFORD.**—A. Lawson, Sec., 107 Kensington-avenue, Watford. Branch meets Mondays at 8.30 p.m. at 152, High Street, Watford.

**WEST HAM.**—Branch meets Thursdays at 8 p.m. at 167 Romford rd., Stratford. Communications to P. Hallard, 22 Colegrave-rd., Stratford, E.

**WOOD GREEN.** Branch meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month at 8 p.m., at Alexandra School, N.22.

**S.P.G.B. PROPAGANDA MEETINGS****LONDON DISTRICT.****Sundays:**

Finsbury Park, 3 p.m.  
Clapham Common, 3 p.m.  
Leytonstone, The Green Man, 11.30 a.m.  
Tottenham, West Green Corner, 7.30 p.m.  
Victoria Park, 11.30 a.m.

**Mondays:**

Highbury Corner, 8 p.m.

**Thursdays:**

Dalston, Queen's Road, 8.30 p.m.

**Friday:**

Stratford, Water Lane, 8 p.m.  
Walthamstow, High Street, (Opposite Baths), 8 p.m.

**Saturdays:**

Edmonton, The Green, 8 p.m.

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.****OBJECT.**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

**Declaration of Principles.****THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain****HOLDS—**

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.